

Backwoods



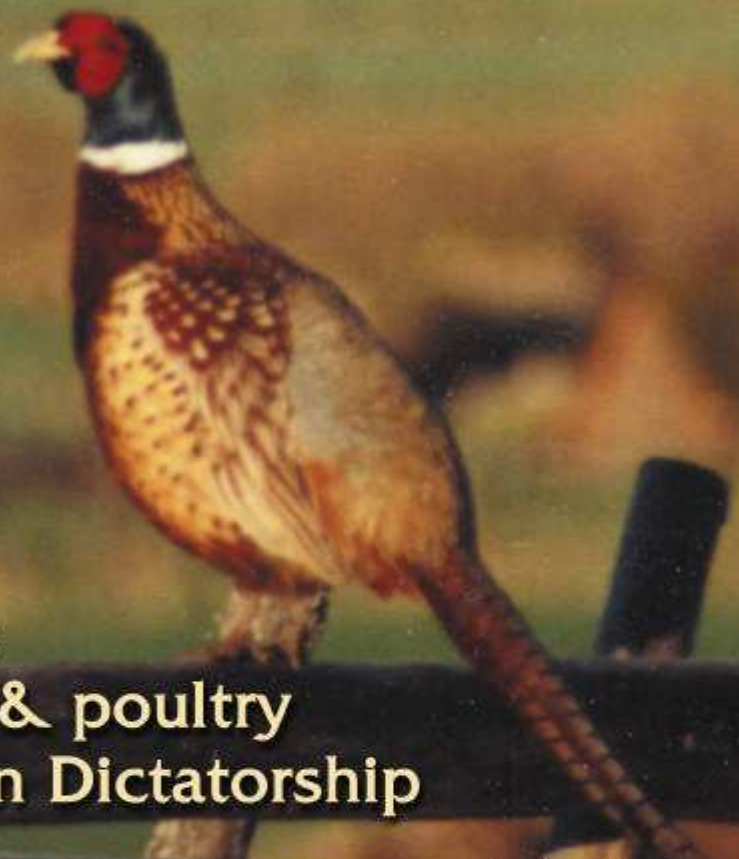
Home magazine

practical ideas for self-reliant living

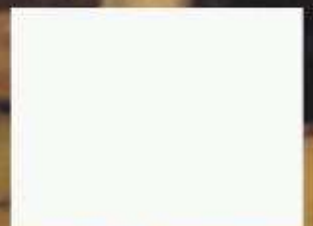
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Harvesting the wild

A fall garden
Perfect apple pie
River rock shower
A creek footbridge
Avoiding heat illness
The 2nd Amendment
Fencing for livestock & poultry
The Coming American Dictatorship



www.backwoodshome.com



Backwoods Home Magazine is written for people who have a desire to pursue personal independence, self sufficiency, and their dreams. It offers "how to" articles on owner-built housing, independent energy, gardening, health, self-employment, country living, and other topics related to an independent and self-reliant lifestyle.

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ABOUT THE COVER

This issue's cover photo, of a cock ringneck pheasant, is from Jackie Clay. It also graces her article on upland birds which begins on page 60. She said she took the photo in the Ruby Valley of Montana one morning about 10 years ago as she drove her son, Javid, to school in Sheridan. Pheasants like the agricultural land with its water, grain, and open ground that is found in the valley. Jackie says she always carries a camera in anticipation of gorgeous shots such as this.



FEATURES

Self-reliance

15 Avoiding heat illness By Dr. Gary F. Arnet

Heat can incapacitate and even kill you. Dr. Arnet tells you what the warning signs of heat illness are, how to treat it, and, more important, how to avoid it in the first place.

60 Harvesting the wild: upland game birds By Jackie Clay

Jackie Clay looks at upland game birds, such as grouse, ptarmigan, quail and turkey, as wild "chickens and turkeys." In her continuing "harvesting the wild" series she talks about how to hunt 'em, clean 'em, and cook 'em.



Building

26 A river rock shower By Dorothy Ainsworth

With a set of instructions, a pile of "cultured stones," and six bags of cement Dorothy Ainsworth set out and built herself her own beautiful river rock shower. In this article she tells us how she did it.

29 Build a graceful footbridge By Harrison Stone

If you're lucky enough to have a year-round stream running through your property, or even if you just have a pond on your land, you can't go wrong if you build a decorative footbridge, as Harrison Stone has. Harrison provides the plans for the bridge which he designed and built himself.



67 Fencing for livestock and poultry By Jackie Clay

Fencing is required to keep your animals in and keep predators out. There are several kinds of fencing in use including barbed wire, electric wires, and wooden fencing. Jackie explains that what you choose will depend on your needs, including what kind of animals you're trying to contain.



Farm and garden

37 The fall garden By Alice Brantley Yeager

Fall may be the best time of the year to be in the garden. The heavy heat of the summer is gone, fall showers relieve you of much of the watering you have to do, and best of all, of course, the crops begin to come in.

50 Two livestock feeders and an insulated water bucket By Clay Sawyer



Country living

8 Can she bake an apple pie, Billy Boy? By Jackie Clay

Jackie Clay can teach us how to make an apple pie whether it's baked, fried, made from dehydrated apples, or even made from green tomatoes. That's right, an apple pie made from tomatoes. And, before she begins, first she even tells us how to make the perfect crust—easily.

56 Make a quilt out of Levis By Dorothy Ainsworth

Don't cart those old Levis britches off to Goodwill quite yet. Dorothy Ainsworth is going to tell you how to get even more mileage out of them by turning them into a quilt—a quilt that will be as tough and as durable as the pants were originally.



Publisher's Note

It's a nice place to visit, but...

We had a sort of editors and writers powwow on the East Coast between issues as John Silveira, Annie Duffy (now Tuttle), Lenie Duffy, and I met up with Richard Blunt, Massad Ayoob, Oliver Del Signore, and Jeff Yago in various places ranging from Boston to Washington, D.C. The highlight of the trip was me winning the Atlantic Coast Golf Championship by one stroke on the final hole over my brother Hugh. The lowlight was me losing the New England Golf Championship by one stroke on the final hole to *BHM* Webmaster Oliver Del Signore.

As cities go, I enjoy Boston, my hometown of many years ago, but I couldn't imagine living there or in any city again. People lean out their car windows and yell at each other during rush hour traffic. At one point I was stuck in traffic and could see my hotel a couple of miles away, but it took me 45 minutes to get to it. We left the car at the hotel most of the time and took the "T," Boston's subway system which takes you anywhere fairly quickly.

Boston is a livable city, unlike cities like Chicago and New York, which are filthy and severely overcrowded. When we drove across the Brooklyn Bridge en route from Maryland to Boston, I pointed to the ugly high rise slum tenements of New York and told my sons, "People live in those buildings." They were incredulous; their closest neighbor is a ¼ mile away and they'd have to navigate through a hilly forest to get to him.

Boston gave me a real special moment though. Blunt, Silveira, and I visited our favorite haunt of our youth, the Crossroads Cafe, now renamed the Crossroads Irish Pub, which we frequented often in our twenties to drink Beefeater martinis, listen to the Righteous Brothers on the juke box, and talk politics and philosophy. It was like time travel, like 30 plus years hadn't elapsed. Even Silveira, true to form, tried to slap the make on the Irish immigrant cocktail waitress. We stayed there a couple of hours, walking out not nearly as drunk as we used to be in our youth.

Little Annie gets married

We had to hurry back to Oregon after our East Coast trip because my daughter and associate editor, Annie, was to get married to Erik Tuttle, a great kid and shooting companion of mine. For those of you who have subscribed to the magazine since its beginning, it is probably as big a shock to you as it is to me to have 7-year-old Annie grow up and get married.

Erik Tuttle is a wonderful kid. If he's representative of who's defending our country, America is in good hands. Not only is he a good shot (I can attest to that from our trips to the clear-cut below my house), but his head is



BHM Associate Editor Annie Tuttle (formerly Duffy) with U.S. Marine Corps Pvt. Erik Tuttle

screwed on right. He believes America's freedoms are the most important things this country has.

The \$10 anthology

Don't forget the \$10 anthology special shown on page 90. Not only is it the best deal we've ever had, but your buying it keeps us healthy. We'd rather make a little money on a lot of sales. It's the American way. It's capitalism at its best—everyone benefits.

Jonathon Lee on deadline

Each deadline I listen to Jonathon Lee's CD-ROM, *Carmel by the Sea*. It's part classical and part contemporary piano music. Relaxing and beautiful. I don't know who he is or how I got the CD-ROM, but he put a note on the jacket to me. The jacket says you can order it at 1-800-533-8233, or listen to more at www.jonathonlee.com. I couldn't do deadline without it.Δ

My view

Is it time for an education revolution?

Education is important, right? Of course it is. Then college must be *really* important, right? ... Did I hear some of you pause before saying, "Well, yeah, I guess so."

If so, you may have come to the same conclusion I have—that college these days is a very iffy proposition. Not because it's expensive, but because, for most of the degrees it confers, it has little to do with education but much to do with instilling "politically correct" thinking into the minds of its students.

Except for the sciences and some business courses, college is pretty much a waste of time today for people who want to be truly educated. Most higher education, and virtually all primary public education, has become the tool of choice for liberals desperate to maintain and expand their power in America by capturing the minds of our youth. Sound far fetched? Let me give you an historical example of what I'm talking about.

At the dawn of the 17th century, the Roman Catholic Church had a near monopoly on the university system in the Western World, just as the liberal political establishment does today. In the 17th century the Church taught that important knowledge was handed down by the Church, with the Pope as the final arbiter of what was true and what was false. Inquiry was pursued within the framework of Aristotelian cause and effect argument, but the Church's precepts were not to be questioned. Among those precepts was that the Earth stood at the center of the universe. Galileo, the greatest scientist of his age, was imprisoned for supporting the Copernican assertion that the Earth really orbited the sun. To the church and educational leadership of the day, truth was less important than dogma.

Developments in astronomy and technology, which included the invention of the telescope, which was invented outside of the university system, proved Galileo right, of course, while other discoveries showed the university system to be wrong about many things. But it took a mighty intellectual struggle that lasted into the 18th century to wrest control of the universities, and hence the intellectual development of the bulk of mankind, away from the ecclesiastics. Many of the discoveries and inventions that ushered in our modern age took place outside the university system in private societies and clubs that formed as an alternative for people who wanted intellectual freedom. The fruits of these clubs included the scientific method and the discoveries of magnetism, electricity, and the laws of the cosmos. As 17th century universities contemplated the number of angels that could sit on the head of a pin, the

societies and clubs discovered the nature of the world. They not only invented our modern world, but their passion for seeking the truth in all things, including political systems, led directly to the greatest political achievement of all time, the *U.S. Constitution* and its *Bill of Rights*.

Now we seem to find ourselves back at square one. The liberal establishment with its politically correct ideas of wealth redistribution, the evils of capitalism, and the sanctity of causes like global warming, animal rights, and all sorts of other nonsense founded on nothing more than their "feel good" ideology, now controls the universities and is teaching their phony philosophy to our children. It's not much different than the 17th century Church teaching false precepts to their students.

The pressure to attend college these days is tremendous. If you can ingest the politically correct liberal line for four years, you get your ticket to employment, your diploma. That piece of paper is good for a job in our government's giant bureaucracy, the military's officer ranks, and a variety of big corporations. Even police agencies now require a degree to become a cop.

Most parents believe their children *must* go to college "to succeed." That was true as well when the ecclesiastics held power in the 17th century universities. And if, by success, we mean getting a good job then I guess it is true, but is that really all we want for ourselves and our children? Do we really want our children to settle for a life of mindless adherence to corporate and government decrees?

If so, today's colleges and universities are doing a great job. Our children will be experts on egalitarianism and why Heather has two mommies; just do not expect them to be able to read or write, or to have any original thoughts.

I get submissions in my office all the time from wannabe writers whose resumes listing their degrees are longer and more impressive than their articles. With rare exceptions, the people I find with knowledge and the ability to transmit that knowledge to others are not degreed but self-educated.

I think it's time we did what 17th and 18th century intellectuals did and find an alternative to the university system. My daughter graduated from high school two years ago, and she succumbed briefly to society's pressure to attend a university, then chucked the idea as a waste of time. I did the same thing in my youth, as even then it was apparent that colleges weren't doing much educating. I could learn far more from reading books.

History is a great teacher. It tells us what has worked and not worked in the past, so we can better understand what will likely work in the present and future. Sadly, today's university system ignores the lessons of the past and works primarily as a way for the ruling liberal class to maintain its power and spread its political ideology. It does a great job of everything except truly educating our youth. Δ

— Dave Duffy

Can she bake an apple pie, Billy Boy?

By Jackie Clay

Okay, I know in the song it's "cherry" pie, but what the heck, we all love apple pies, don't we? Unfortunately, few people bake good old fashioned apple pies anymore. Maybe it's because they have an undeserved reputation for being hard to make. You know, the cardboard crust rap. But a good pie is really pretty easy to put together, and is *so much* better than anything you can buy in the store. And a whole lot cheaper, not to mention a whole lot healthier. (I don't put ingredients in my pies that make you glow in the dark.)

I taught my son Bill to bake an apple pie over the phone. He wanted to impress his girlfriend. I guess it must have worked. They've been married over a year now.

Here are some tips so you too can bake that perfect pie. We'll even make fried apple pies, pies from dehydrated apples, and even a dynamite "apple" pie, made from hard, green tomatoes that you can't tell from the real McCoy. Let's get started.

Making the perfect crust

One big secret in making a nice, flaky crust is to use cold lard or shortening and keep the crust cold until baking. You can do this by first using cold shortening and then by using ice cold water in the recipe. And by handling the dough ball as little as possible you can maintain this chill. I take this a step farther by chilling the dough before I roll it out.

Here's my old-family basic flaky pie crust recipe. You'll note that it has more shortening in it than most. An



Add a scoop of homemade vanilla ice cream and you have heaven on earth!

ancestor of ours was a baker and was well known for his wonderful pies. His secret? He put more lard in the crust, which rendered it much more flaky.

Basic extra-flaky pie crust (two-crust pies):

3 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
1½ cup less 1 Tbsp. lard or shortening
Enough ice water to make a ball which is not sticky or crumbly

Mix the flour and salt in a medium mixing bowl. Then cut in the cold shortening until the pieces are the size of small peas. Add enough ice water, a little at a time, until the ball easily draws together and holds; do not get it sticky. Go slowly.

When you have your dough ball, chill it, covered, for an hour (if you have the time). Sprinkle flour over a counter top or pastry board and dust

your rolling pin well. Buy a good heavy rolling pin, as those light-weight rolling pins are not adequate for regular use.

Divide your dough ball, leaving one portion a bit larger than the other. This larger ball is your bottom crust, as it must fit down into the pie pan.

Dust the bottom of this ball, then begin to roll it out. Go slowly and move the dough around a bit as you work, making sure that the underside is well floured. If it is not, it will stick to your rolling surface. Try to keep your dough working into a circle, as even as you can get it. When it is about an inch and a half larger than your pie plate, all around, stop. (You can gently place your upside down pie plate on the dough to check.)

Then gently roll your dough up on your rolling pin and carefully unroll it over your pie pan. With your fingers, tuck the crust down to fit along the sides of the pan.

With a table knife, squeeze the dough off at the rim of the pan, using a sawing motion all around the pie tin. Don't "cut" the dough, pinch it off. It keeps you from tearing the fragile crust.

Don't add your left-over pie dough to the ball for your top crust; it'll toughen it because you will be over-handling it.

Repeat the above process, making a circle of dough only an inch all around, larger than your pan. In the center, I cut two semi-circle lines, bowed toward each other. These will be your steam vents, shaped like two stems of wheat. At the top of one line, take the handle of a table knife and make a small dent. Then down each side, make five similar dents. You have an ear of wheat! I even add two wispy lines on top, simulating the beard of the wheat. Very pretty and so quick to do.

You must include a steam vent to prevent the pie from bubbling over, damaging the looks of the crust *and* making an ugly, smelly mess of burning pie juice on the bottom of your oven. It also keeps your crust from getting soggy. By the way, if your pie does run over bit (or the juice even



To pick up a pie crust safely, simply roll it carefully on your rolling pin.

catches fire on the bottom of your oven), simply toss handfuls of table salt on the smoking mess. It stops smelling and is quite easy to clean up after the baking is done.

If you have the time, you can gently roll your top crust up and lay it out on a large plate and chill both crusts. If not, you should make the filling first so you can proceed to bake your pie immediately after the top crust has been laid on the pie. Here's an easy, quick filling for you to try.

Basic apple pie filling:

The best apples for a pie are Granny Smith, Wolf River, Winesap, and most any tart, juicy apple that does not cook down quickly. (You don't want an applesauce pie.)

6 cups peeled, sliced tart apples 1 cup sugar (may use ½ brown and ½ granulated) 2 Tbsp. flour ½ tsp. ground cinnamon pinch salt 2 Tbsp. butter



Toss fresh, sliced apples with flour, cinnamon, and sugar for a simple, tasty pie filling.

In a medium mixing bowl, combine all the ingredients, except for the butter. Toss well to combine. Pour the filling into the unbaked pie shell. Spread your filling in the bottom crust. You should have enough filling to heap up in the center; it will cook and become more flat in the baking. If you don't, don't worry; just remember and use more apples next time. Dot in four places with butter. Before laying on the top crust I moisten around the edge of the bottom crust, using pie juice. This acts as "glue" and helps seal the two crusts together.

Now, carefully carry the top crust to your pie, rolled gently on your rolling pin. Then unroll it, centered, on top



With the filling in the bottom crust, you are ready for the top crust.

of your pie. Those nice wheat stems act as a visual guide to help you.

Take the table knife you used to trim your bottom crust and trim the top crust nice and even. There are several ways you can seal the two crusts together. The first, and easiest, is to simply use a table fork's tines and press down all the way around the pie, making little lines encircling the entire edge of the crust.

This works, but a lot of people prefer an artier looking pie crust—I've included. I usually use the plain end of my table knife, then hold down on the crust, with my thumb and first finger pointing out, away from the pie. And with the knife handle end, poke the crust in between the fingers. Then, by moving around the pie, I create a pretty fluting on the edge of the crust. Not only is it attractive, but it effectively seals the two crusts together.

Hold the knife down against the pie pan, then just push gently. It takes very little practice, and you'll have a truly old-fashioned looking pie.

I've also used engraved silverware handles and even old skeleton key handles to press down around the pie crust for unique and attractive pie crust edges. The main thing is to press and "mash" the two crusts together effectively to prevent juices from seeping out while baking.

Another "arty" touch is to gently rub margarine over the top crust of your pie, then sprinkle a little sugar over it. This makes a crispy, sugary pie crust that people find irresistible. When your pie is decorated to your liking, bake at 350° until the crust is nicely browned, usually about 35 minutes.

Which reminds me, you may have some leftover pie dough. My kids would never forgive me if I didn't include their favorite part of pie baking—making cinnamon pie cookies. Simply roll out your leftover pie dough, handling it as little as necessary. You can make strips, shapes, or just roll out one big "blob." Then rub margarine over the dough and sprinkle sugar and cinnamon to your liking over the top. Bake at 350° until bubbly and done. Do not overbake. Eat warm. You'll never have leftovers.

Dried apple pie filling

Pour 5 cups boiling water over 5 cups of dehydrated apples in the evening. Cover bowl and let steep overnight. Refrigerate if the weather is hot. The next day, drain off any water left; you don't have to be picky, just get most of it. Add half a cup of sugar, ½ tsp. cinnamon, 1 Tbsp. flour and stir well, until all apples are well coated. Pour into unbaked 9-inch pie shell and cover with top crust. Bake

at 350° until crust is nicely browned. An old variation adds ½ cup of milk and 3 beaten egg yolks and substitutes 1 cup of raisins for one cup of dried apples, making a more custard-apple/raisin pie, which is also very good.

These dried apple pies are a great way to use all those great dehydrated apples from your long-term storage pantry in order to rotate your supply. You hardly need an "emergency" of great magnitude to make one of these pies. (Darn, the chickens got into the garden. Guess I'll make a dried apple pie for tomorrow's lunch. See what I mean?)

By using the same rehydration process for your dried apples, you can make fried pies which make those disgusting, sickening-sweet snack pies at the store seem like a non-food. (Aren't they, anyway?) Here's a recipe for fried apple pies. They've been Amish fare for generations and are so good to stick in a lunch pal.

Fried apple pies

Crust:

<p>2/3 cup condensed milk or cream 1 egg, beaten 2½ cups flour ¼ tsp. baking powder pinch salt</p>
--

Mix the milk and egg, then mix them into dry ingredients. Roll the mixture out in a rectangle, then use a large mug or some such round pattern and cut out 6-7-inch circles of pie dough. Carefully fill each with apple filling and fold the edges, pinching well. Fry in deep fryer until done. Sprinkle with powdered sugar while still warm.

You may also drizzle a glaze over them, if you wish. A good glaze can be made by simply mixing 1 cup powdered sugar, ½ teaspoon vanilla, and a drop or two of milk—just enough to make a medium glaze.

Okay, we have fresh apple pies for your apples fresh from the tree, dried apple pies for dehydrated apples from perhaps a year or two ago. But what if you've just planted a couple of baby trees in your yard and have a long time to wait for those juicy apples?

Are you stopped from baking a pie? Do you run for the grocery store? (Remember, we're self-reliant.) Hmm. Okay, a hint. You have a big garden, full of tomatoes, especially hundreds of hard, very green tomatoes, right.

Tomatoes? Well, at that stage, green tomatoes are really more like...you've got it—*apples!*

A long time ago, when life was not so good, I really wanted to bake an apple pie, but had no apples. So I walked out in the garden and picked a pan full of peach-sized hard green tomatoes and made my "apple" pie. And you know what? I had such raves over that pie that I make several each year. It's really a family favorite. My oldest son, Bill, asks for it every time he's home.

And, no, you really can't tell it from the "real" thing. Honest. Why don't



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you give it a try when you're overburdened with all those just-before-killing-frost hard green tomatoes that won't ripen if picked. This is one tasty way to "save" them.

Green tomato apple pie

5 cups hard green tomatoes, sliced
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
1 tsp. cinnamon
pinch salt
2 Tbsp. flour
3 Tbsp. butter



To nicely flute the crust edges, simply tuck the crusts between thumb and first finger all around the edge, sealing it effectively.

Choose hard green tomatoes that are very dark; don't use any with a hint of yellow. I peel mine, but you don't have to. Peel like an apple; don't attempt to dip into boiling water as when you can tomatoes. Cut the tomatoes like you would an apple for pie. Then toss dry ingredients well with slices.

Place in an unbaked, chilled 9-inch pie crust and dot with butter. Cover with the top crust and bake at 350° until done. Serve warm with home-made French vanilla ice cream. But *don't* tell 'em what they're eating—until the raves have died down.

There you have it. Now you can get right down and bake that perfect apple pie, even if you don't have apples. Oh, by the way, you can also bake apple pies with home canned apple slices; just drain them and use as if fresh. I usually reduce the sugar by half if they're canned in a sugar syrup, as they do absorb quite a bit of sweetness. To prevent a soggy lower crust, you can either brush the bottom crust with a beaten egg yolk or chill it extra well. (Canned apple filling is wetter than fresh.)

A good apple pie works so well with self-reliant living and seems to be a symbol of our lifestyle. You know, "Mom, country, and apple pie." Perhaps "yesterday" isn't so far back, anyway. Δ



AVOIDING HEAT ILLNESS

Drink early and often to avoid dehydration. The body normally needs two to three quarts of water per day, but this can increase to five to six quarts while hiking or working in the heat. Dehydration leads to heat illnesses.

By Dr. Gary F. Arnet

She didn't say "Hi" or even acknowledge our presence as she jogged past us on the trail that hot August day in Lassen Volcanic National Park in northern California. Even at an elevation of 6,000 feet, it was an unseasonably warm 80 degrees and this young runner, no older than 18 years old, wore skimpy jogging clothes that exposed her skin to the searing sun, while carrying no drinking water. Sweating profusely and with skin bright red, she ran up the trail and out of sight, miles from any trailhead.

A half-mile or so up the trail, we again met up with her. Now sitting on a rock crying, she told us her story. She had been jogging with friends when she became separated. She was lost and had been going up and down trails for hours frantically trying to

find her way back. Dehydrated and near heat exhaustion, she was so embarrassed and scared that she didn't ask for help when she passed us the first time. We gave her water and sat her in the shade as her friends caught up with her and brought her back.

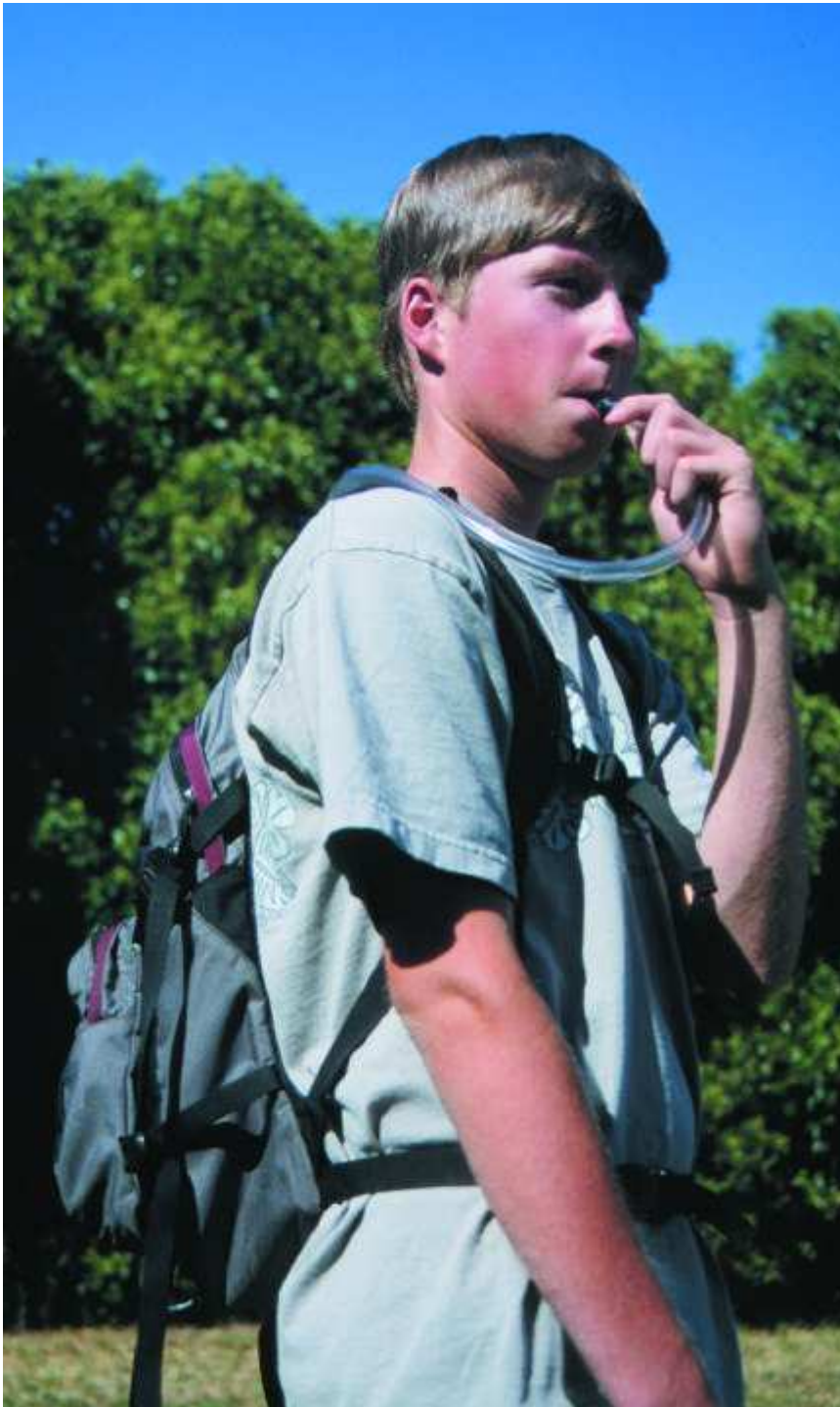
We think of heat illnesses, such as heat exhaustion, heat stroke, or dehydration, as something that affects firefighters wearing heavy protective clothing in hot conditions or something that our soldiers face fighting in the desert. Heat illnesses affect many of us in our daily lives, however. Every year we hear of high school football players that die from heat stroke during summer practice. In athletes, heat stroke is the second leading cause of death. Elderly die in the cities during heat waves. Hikers die, as do those stranded when their cars break down.

In a normal year, an average of 175 Americans die of heat illnesses. During the heat wave of 1980, 1,250 Americans died. The sad thing is that heat illnesses are largely preventable through planning and common sense.

The body and heat

The body produces heat from food and from muscles during exercise. Normal metabolism generates 2,000 to 5,000 kilocalories per day and would raise the temperature of your body 1.5 degrees every hour if it were not for the body's cooling mechanisms. When you exercise heavily or carry a backpack in hot temperatures, heat production by the body increases five to tenfold. Add to that hot and humid environmental conditions and it is easy to overheat, a process called hyperthermia.

Normally, the body reduces heat by sending more blood to the skin where



A Platypus or CamelBak hydration system, consisting of an easy-to-reach drinking tube attached to a collapsible water container located in a pack, encourages individuals to drink frequently while in the heat, preventing dehydration.

blood vessels dilate to bring the blood closer to the surface where it can be cooled by the lower air temperature. This only works when the air temper-

ature is lower than the body temperature. Normal core body temperature is 98.6 degrees. When air tempera-

tures exceed 95 degrees, the blood is not cooled in this manner.

Sweating is another way the body uses to lower the temperature of the blood. As the sweat evaporates, it cools the body down. Each quart of sweat that is evaporated on the skin removes about 580 kilocalories of body heat. At this rate, body temperature can normally be regulated.

Unfortunately, the body is already two to five percent dehydrated before we begin to feel thirsty, and losing only one quart more can produce severe dehydration.

It is necessary to drink 2 to 3 quarts of water per day to maintain normal metabolism. With sweating caused by physical exercise or in hot temperatures, this can easily increase to 4 to 6 quarts per day (1 to 1.5 gallons), or in extreme conditions over 8 quarts per day. It is possible to sweat away 1 to 2 quarts of water per hour in extreme conditions. The U.S. Army warns that soldiers in hot environments can lose 15 quarts (almost 4 gallons) of water per day.

Humidity also leads to overheating. When the humidity level is over 80%, sweat does not evaporate and the body's ability to cool is dramatically decreased. Sweat produced drips from the skin and only leads to dehydration without providing cooling.

If enough water is not consumed to replace the lost water, blood vessels in the skin constrict since there is not enough volume of blood to keep them open and sweating ceases in order to conserve water for the body. This leads to the body overheating. When

heat-control mechanisms of the body are overloaded, the increased body heat rapidly causes tissue damage to the vital organs such as the brain, heart, kidneys, and muscles, and disrupts the chemical processes of the body.

Four environmental conditions determine the risk of heat illness: The **absolute air temperature** (ambient temperature) is the air temperature as measured with a thermometer in the shade and is the least important cause. **Solar load** is the amount of direct sun on the skin and can be an important contributor to heat illness. Full sun on bare skin in severe conditions can add up to 150 kilocalories per hour of heat load to an individual. As mentioned, humidity determines the rate that sweat can evaporate and cause cooling. The drier the air, the greater the evaporation and amount of cooling. **Humidity** is more important than temperature in determining the risk of overheating. Finally, **wind speed** is an important factor in assisting evaporation. Cool winds reduce heat stress, while hot winds increase it.

Prevention of heat illnesses

Avoid dehydration: The human body is 75% water and needs a constant new supply since we have no method of storing it in our body. Dehydration, drinking less water than the body needs, is the major cause of all heat-related illnesses. Unfortunately, the body is already two to five percent dehydrated before we begin to feel thirsty and losing only one quart more can produce severe dehydration.

The body conserves water by not producing as much urine when it is dehydrated and urine becomes concentrated and dark yellow in color. Urinating plentiful amounts of light-colored urine shows that you are not dehydrated.

It takes several days to as long as a week to acclimatize to hot weather. During this time the body will sweat more and lose more salt, which can lead to electrolyte imbalance.

Water loss needs to be replaced, requiring a conscious, continual effort to stay properly hydrated to avoid dehydration. Drink fluids even if you are not thirsty. While consuming 2 to 3 quarts of water a day is pretty easy, it gets harder to comply when water needs increase. Plan your daily water consumption, drinking early and often. If you expect to lose 4 to 5 quarts in a day, drink one quart of water when you wake up, one quart with each of three meals, and small amounts frequently throughout the day. The U.S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine estimates that the maximum amount of water that can be absorbed per hour is 1.3 quarts and recommends drinking about two cups every 30 minutes during intense periods of work. For hikers and backpackers, a good rule is to drink every time you take a break or stop briefly. During physical activity, it is easier for your body to handle small amounts of water spread out during the day rather than a large amount all at once.

People avoid drinking enough for many reasons, but it is often because their water bottle is difficult to get out of their pack. Water carrier systems, such as the Platypus or CamelBak hydration systems, are very convenient. They consist of collapsible plastic water containers that are placed in your pack or in a separate water back-



Heat and sun can cause heat exhaustion or heat stroke when working or playing outdoors. Walk at an easy pace, and wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothes and a broad-brimmed hat.

pack. Using a plastic tube from the water container, you can sip on water as you hike without having to reach for a bottle.

Water needs to be drinkable. Water left in the sun on a 105-degree day will be too hot to drink. Plain, cool water at 60 to 70 degrees is more likely to be consumed, and flavorings, such as Kool Aid, Gatorade, lemonade, and others, may help encourage drinking.

Prolonged sweating from heat or exercise can also cause loss of body salts, called electrolytes. Electrolytes

are minerals, such as sodium, potassium, and chloride, in the body fluids. They are essential to maintain fluid balance and function of the nerves and muscles.

Sodium chloride (salt) is lost in large enough amounts during heavy sweating to cause medical problems. When an individual replaces lost fluid with normal water, it further dilutes the concentration of sodium in the body. This salt deficit, called hyponatremia, is essentially water intoxication and symptoms may mimic heat exhaustion or gastroenteritis, making a diagnosis difficult. Recently, it has been recognized that many marathon runners develop hyponatremia during races, and rangers at the Grand Canyon National Park have also seen this problem in hikers.

As with dehydration, the good news is that prevention is fairly easy. Experts recommend eating salty snack foods such as Saltine crackers, Pringles potato chips, Cheez-Its, salted nuts, or drinking sports drinks. Single serving bags of Cheez-Its contain 340 mg of sodium and 20 ounces of Gatorade has 114 mg of sodium, enough to prevent hyponatremia. Salt pills, which irritate the lining of the stomach, are no longer recommended on a routine basis.

Acclimatize: The body takes time to acclimatize to temperature. Firefighters who are brought from the



Ice packs or cold packs can be placed along the side of the neck, armpits, and groin areas, where large blood vessels are relatively close to the skin, to rapidly cool the blood in an individual with heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Do not put ice packs directly on the skin for long periods of time. Wrap them in a light towel or cloth.

cool coastal areas to inland fires where air temperatures are over 100 degrees suffer a high rate of heat-related illness. It takes several days to as long as a week to acclimatize to hot weather. During this time the body will sweat more and lose more salt, which can lead to electrolyte imbalance. With acclimatization, sweating becomes less and the sweat glands secrete less salt.

When first in a hot environment, allow yourself plenty of time to get used to the temperatures before exercising or working for prolonged amounts of time in the heat. To fully acclimatize can take 7 to 10 days, during which time you should exercise about two hours per day. While doing this at home works, most of us don't have this amount of time to acclimatize when we travel to a new area, such as on vacation. In such cases, minimize the amount of work you do and maximize water intake.

Watch very young and very old individuals carefully in hot weather, as their bodies do not regulate tem-

perature well and they can rapidly become overheated. Age does affect the severity of heat illness. Heat cramps in an 18-year-old may be heat exhaustion in a 40-year-old and heat stroke in someone age 60. Individuals with weight or alcohol problems are especially prone to the heat.

Conserve body water: Minimize or avoid sweat-producing activities in work and travel. This is especially important in survival situations. Stay cool, stay in the shade, and do not lie on hot ground, which can be 30 to 45 degrees hotter than the air. Often, cooler ground can be found by digging just a few inches below the surface. Breathe through your nose to reduce water loss and do not smoke. Eat at a minimum, as water is needed for digestion, and avoid eating fatty foods since they require more water to digest.

Hike or work in the early morning or late afternoon when the sun is low and the heat is less intense, causing less water loss from sweating. Walk at an easy pace and wear lightweight,

Age does affect the severity of heat illness. Heat cramps in an 18-year-old may be heat exhaustion in a 40-year-old and heat stroke in someone age 60.

light-colored, loose-fitting clothes. These allow more ventilation and reflect the heat better than dark colors. Don't expose your skin to the hot sun and wear a broad-brimmed hat to keep the sun off your face.

Other precautions

Get plenty of rest. The U. S. Army Research Institute of Environmental Medicine has found that fatigue and lack of sleep reduces the body's ability to regulate heat, causing overheating.

Be aware of the environmental conditions that you may face. Know the anticipated temperature, humidity, wind, and solar load predicted for the day and plan your activity and water intake accordingly. The National Weather Service heat index is a way to help determine the risk of developing heat illnesses. It is a chart that combines the air temperature and relative humidity to derive the "apparent air temperature," essentially how hot it really feels when humidity is added to the air temperature. For example, an air temperature of 95 degrees with 60 percent humidity has the same effect on your body (apparent air temperature) as 114 degrees. These are for temperatures taken in shady conditions. In full sun, they can be up to 15 degrees higher. At an apparent air temperature above 90 degrees, risk of heat illness is high and activity should be adjusted accordingly.

Certain drugs and medications taken in hot weather conditions can promote heat illness. Avoid taking drugs such as atropine and anti-motion sickness drugs which hinder sweating, beta-blockers which decrease cardiac output, diuretics which promote dehydration, antihistamines and antidepressants which alter normal physiology, and drugs such as hallucinogens and cocaine which increase muscle activity and therefore body heat. Some of these should not be stopped on your own,

so talk to your doctor if you anticipate this being a problem.

Management of heat illnesses

Dehydration: Thirst, irritability, nausea, and weakness occur with 5% loss of body water, only 2.5 quarts for a 150-pound person. A 10% loss will cause headache, dizziness, inability to walk, and tingling sensations of the arms and legs. At 15% loss, the tongue becomes swollen, vision can dim, numb sensations occur on the skin, and urination may be painful. Any greater water loss can cause death.

Treatment is to replace lost fluids by drinking water, juice, lemonade, Gatorade or similar sports drinks, soup, or decaffeinated coffee. Drinking alcoholic and caffeinated beverages is discouraged since they increase urination and promote dehydration. Drink until you begin urinating pale yellow urine, remembering that it can take 6 to 8 hours for the fluids in the body to become balanced before urine production will begin.

If the person is not alert or is having prolonged vomiting or diarrhea, they should be evacuated immediately to medical care so that intravenous fluids can be given.

Heat Edema: Heat edema (swelling) is common, especially in the elderly, during the first few days in a hot environment. The hands, ankles, and feet become puffy or swollen and rings may become tight or difficult to remove. Remove rings or constrictive jewelry and minimize walking. When resting, keep the feet elevated. The swelling should resolve on its own within a few days. If leg swelling is associated with shortness of breath or the individual is otherwise ill, swelling may be due to other causes and a physician should be seen.

Miliaria Rubra (Prickly Heat): Prickly heat is an itchy, red, bumpy rash caused by plugged sweat glands

on areas of the skin that are kept wet by sweating such as the armpits and groin. Treatment involves cooling and drying the affected skin while trying to avoid further sweating. Itching may be relieved by taking antihistamines, such as Benadryl 25 to 50 mg every 6 hours.

An air temperature of 95 degrees with 60 percent humidity has the same effect on your body (apparent air temperature) as 114 degrees.

Heat Syncope: Syncope (fainting) is caused by insufficient blood to the brain. In the heat, blood vessels on the skin dilate, taking blood from the brain and heart, and standing for long periods of time causes blood to stay in the legs. Both of these things, along with lower blood volume from dehydration, can cause lack of blood to the brain resulting in a person becoming light-headed, dizzy, or fainting.

Have the person lie down with their legs elevated until the symptoms have resolved. Give them cool fluids to drink while cooling the skin with water or by placing ice packs or cool cloths next to the neck, armpits, and groin.

Heat Cramps: Painful muscle spasms can occur in overheated muscles that are exercised heavily. Often they occur in individuals who are salt deficient. Cramps often begin when the individual is resting after exercise and present as severe pain and spasms of the calf, thigh, abdomen, or hand muscles.

Treatment is to have the individual rest in a cool environment while drinking plenty of fluids. Apply

steady, gentle massaging-type pressure to the cramped muscle. Salt drinks or snacks are helpful with heat cramps.

Heat Exhaustion: The most common form of heat-related illness is heat exhaustion. If not treated, it can continue on to become heat stroke, a life-threatening emergency. Heat exhaustion is overheating of the body temperature that does not cause permanent damage, while heat stroke can permanently disable or kill the victim.

Heat exhaustion occurs when the heart and cardiovascular system cannot meet the needs of the skin (temperature regulation), muscles, and internal organs. It usually involves both dehydration and salt depletion. Heat exhaustion is frequently seen as part of other conditions such as illnesses that cause fever, loss of electrolytes, or gastrointestinal illnesses.

Symptoms may include thirst, fatigue, nausea, weakness, loss of

appetite, vomiting, headache, dizziness on standing from a seated position, and muscle cramps. Sweating is almost always present; however, it may be absent and the skin may feel cool to the touch. Mental status is usually normal, although there may be minor confusion or agitation. The pulse is weak and rapid.

Treatment involves taking the stress off of the cardiovascular system and heart. The individual should stop all physical activity, rest in a cool, shaded environment, and remove any heavy or restrictive clothing. Have them drink plenty of fluids containing small amounts of salt, as you would for dehydration.

While heat exhausted individuals may be able to cool off enough on their own, it is best to use external cooling methods to help them. Cool water can be splashed on the skin while fanning the individual. Better yet, ice or cold packs can be placed along the side of the neck, armpits, and groin areas where large blood vessels are relatively close to the skin. This promotes rapid cooling of the blood. Be careful not to put ice packs directly on the skin for long periods of time. Wrap them in a light towel or cloth.

Individuals with heat exhaustion appear to recover very quickly with the above care. However, it takes the body 24 hours of rest and re-hydration to fully recover.

Heat Stroke: As heat exhaustion progresses, the body's cooling system completely breaks down and the blood and organs overheat. Known as heat stroke, this is a true medical emergency that has an 80 percent chance of death if not treated.

The difference between heat exhaustion and heat stroke is technically the presence of tissue injury, something that is difficult at best to tell in pre-hospital situation. For practical purposes, anyone who has symptoms of heat exhaustion and abnormal changes in their mental state, such as extreme confusion, disorientation,

anxiety, agitation, or inability to walk in a straight line, should be considered to have heat stroke. They may also develop seizures or coma.

Body temperature is hot, usually over 105 degrees. Blood pressure is usually low (check for a weak pulse in the wrist), pulse high (greater than 100 beats per minute), and breathing rapid (over 20 breaths per minute). The skin may be red and hot, although this does not occur with everyone. Sweating may have stopped or may be present.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency that requires rapid hospitalization. Seek help immediately. Above 106 degrees, the body can lose the ability to control its own temperature and temperatures can rise uncontrollably causing severe damage to the kidneys, liver, brain, heart, muscles, and coagulation systems. Intensive medical care is required.

While waiting for help, immediately cool the victim as quickly as possible using the techniques described under heat exhaustion. If available, the individual can be carefully immersed in cool water. Do not immerse in ice water, which can cause severe constriction of the skin blood vessels and limit the ability to lose heat. It can also cause shivering, which is the body's way to generate more heat—not something you need at this time. Treat for shock by lying the person down with legs elevated.

Do not give the individual anything to drink because of the risk of vomiting and aspirating stomach contents into the lungs. Medicines for fever, such as Tylenol or aspirin, are of no help and should not be given.

Most heat illnesses are entirely preventable through proper planning and hydration. Remember to know the environmental conditions you are facing, stay properly hydrated, and avoid over-exposure to the sun and heat. Doing so will let you enjoy the outdoors without becoming the next victim of the heat. Δ

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Ayoob on Firearms:

Reflections on the Second Amendment

A reader named Molly e-mailed a note to the office of *BHM* asking what the editor thought of Attorney General Ashcroft's recent affirmation of the Second Amendment as an individual right rather than an assurance of a state's right to organize a militia. She also asked specifically how I felt about it.

Well, Molly, I can't speak for Dave Duffy and John Silveira and the rest of the crew, though I strongly suspect that they were as delighted with it as I was. When I heard the news "I would have done two cartwheels and a backflip," as the saying goes, if I wasn't too old and stiff.

As you might imagine, the reaction was not the same in the gun-banning industry. (Yes, I use the term "industry" advisedly. It is unlikely that anyone but Handgun Control Incorporated, so bankrupt of public credibility that it recently re-named itself, would have paid Sarah Brady her hefty six-figure salary to go around giving boring speeches laced with long-discredited propaganda. Only the most greedy of plaintiffs' lawyers would have brought the legally moronic liability actions against gun industries by the cities.) The anti-gunners screamed for the head of John Ashcroft, demanding everything from firing to disbarment, because he dared to undermine the work of the Clinton Administration that was intended to put the firearms industry out of business and begin the disarming of the citizenry in earnest.

Au contraire. What John Ashcroft did was what his predecessor Janet Reno lacked the legal acumen and/or judicial temperament and/or intellec-

tual honesty to do: he correctly applied the *Constitution* and the *Bill of Rights* that are the foundational documents for the nation's chief interpreter of law. For more than a decade, the overwhelming majority of studies of *Second Amendment* issues that emanated from competent, impartial sources had upheld the view that the *Second Amendment* is an individual right rather than a state's right.

Consider the following

History: The disarming of the citizenry has always been the mark of the totalitarian government. From the asagai-wielding warriors of Shaka Zulu to the yeomen of England to the Minutemen of the fledgling United States to the citizen-soldiers of Switzerland, the armed citizen has always been a constant, indispensable ingredient to a free country.

Obvious legislative intent: When a law is interpreted later, by the public or by the highest appellate courts, one factor that must be considered is obvious legislative intent. That is, what would any reasonable, prudent, unprejudiced observer who came along later conclude was the intent of the lawmakers in making this particular thing the rule of the land?

Any approach to obvious legislative intent applied to the *Second Amendment* has to come down in favor of it being an individual right. If one reads the entire document, every single element in the *Bill of Rights* speaks to the rights of each individual citizen. This document is one of the most thoroughly planned and carefully crafted in the history of the collective human experience. Are



Massad Ayoob

we to assume that the Framers tossed in an element of state's rights as an afterthought? Why, then, was it second on the list instead of last? Or should we assume that this braintrust of the most gifted, most eloquent, most insightful authorities of their time never noticed that state militias would come under states' rights and not individual rights?

Such incongruity, such an overreach of the imagination, simply boggles any logical and prudent mind. The obvious legislative intent is, well, obvious. Simply put, the greatest American intellects of the time knew that the citizen is the state, and knew also that the state exists for the citizen more than the citizen exists for the state.

We must never forget that every single patriot of the American Revolution was a citizen of a British colony before the excesses of the

British government forced him to pick up his rifle and fight for independence. In the last analysis, it could be effectively argued that all the “colonists” wanted were the same rights as an Englishman in Old Blighty. At the time, that included the right of the individual to bear arms. Remember that the oft-quoted Draconian gun laws of England were a phenomenon of the 20th century; in the time the *Bill of Rights* was drafted, no citizen was more free to own the weapons of the King’s soldiers than the citizen of England.

Look to the “source documents:”

History shows us that those who wrote the *Bill of Rights* pored scrupulously over the constitutions of each of the original thirteen states. It was from these sources that the often-mentioned rights to possess arms were drawn by those who wrote the *Amendments to the Constitution of the United States*. A great many of them made it abundantly clear that the right of the citizen to protect himself and his family, individually, was at the core of the right to keep and bear arms. The ability of that citizen to become a citizen soldier and bear those arms in defense of his state was simply one more reason why the right to keep and bear arms served the common good of a free state.

Finally, there is the most logical answer, the short sound-bite answer that hits the hardest and is absolutely irrefutable. When someone with a non-existent to superficial understanding of constitutional law tells you that the *Second Amendment* speaks only to the National Guard (which did not even exist until long, long after the *Bill of Rights* went into effect), remind them of the following: At the time of the American Revolution, a “National Guard” would have been Tories loyal to King George.

The price they had paid for their freedom—in blood, in treasure, and in grief—had to still weigh heavy in

the hearts of those who framed the *Bill of Rights*. Can anyone seriously believe that they would put second-most on their list of That Which Would Keep Us Free, a mechanism that would have given indigenous occupying forces to the next tyrannical enemy?

As one of the Patriots said of another matter, “Forbid it, Almighty God!”

The bottom line is, there is simply no logical argument to be made for a state’s right to raise a militia being inserted into a manifesto of individual citizens’ rights.

Relationships to other individual rights: What is that oft-quoted phrase? Ah, yes: “the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Without the wherewithal to defend life itself, it doesn’t take a philosopher to figure out that liberty and the pursuit of happiness (and obviously life itself) can be taken away from the helpless by the empowered. The gun has historically been an equalizer. Today the buzzword is “force multiplier.”

You are a black man in Michigan, with a howling mob of white racists outside who want to destroy your home and lynch you. Can you stop them with your bare hands? No. Can you stop them with a gun? Yes ... and, as the Michigan case showed early in the 20th Century, you will be acquitted by a jury of your peers.

You are a woman attacked by a gang of vicious young rapists in a public park. Can you stop them with your bare hands? No. In the latter half of the 20th Century in New York City, the victim of the infamous “wilding” incident learned this the hard way, and remains physically brain-damaged from her ordeal in addition to the shattering emotional effect of the gang rape. Could this woman have protected herself if she’d had the same wherewithal as the armed citizen in Michigan?

Well, let’s just say her chances would have been a helluva lot better.

Even when you don’t have enough bullets to shoot every member of the murderous, rapacious mob, you certainly have enough to shoot the leaders, and natural selection being what it is, this has a remarkably persuasive effect on leaders of mobs.

In Stephen King’s book, *Stand Alone*, later made into a movie, a group of young boys are about to be savagely mauled by a gang of man-size teenage delinquents. As the leader of the criminal gang prepares to do extreme violence, one of the boys withdraws from his backpack his father’s .45 automatic, which the boy has taken for protection on the long wilderness trek that is the core of the book. The gang leader sneers and asks the youth if he thinks he can shoot every member of the gang.

The boy resolutely aims the pistol and gives a classic reply: “No, Ace. Just you.”

It was one of that classic movie moments that did what cinema should do more often: “Art imitates life.” Studies from the California Attorney General’s Office to the work of eminent criminologist Gary Kleck to the absolutely unassailable work of Professor John Lott show that when criminal predators close in on innocent victims, and the innocent victims draw guns, the criminals back off most of the time without blood being spilled.

It is a fundamental law of mammalian nature: predators do not routinely attack other creatures that have powerful fangs and claws of their own. They sometimes do so, but only out of absolute desperation, or in turf wars, or when in the mind-bending rut of the mating season. This means that if you don’t deny food to the starving, don’t try to sell drugs in the territory of the Bloods or the Crips, and don’t hit on that pretty girl hanging on the arm of that big guy wearing Hell’s Angels colors, you have probably narrowed your assailant profile down to criminals seeking tar-

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gets of opportunity. A criminal seeking a target of opportunity will historically back off from his assault when he realizes he has picked the wrong victim. If he doesn't back off, well, Darwin's Law of Natural Selection will take its course once again. I've come to call it, "Cause of death: sudden and acute failure of the victim selection process."

Lord Blackstone, the greatest of all our commentators on the Common Law, said that self-defense was the highest of all human rights. This was understood by the framers of the Colonial States' constitutions. They made it very clear that the right of the individual to protect himself and his family from unlawful criminal assault—in his home or in public, anytime, anyplace, anywhere—was at the core of the individual citizen's Right To Keep And Bear Arms.

A matter of logic: Bring it all together. John Ashcroft was right. That overwhelming aggregate of

Constitutional Law scholars was right. George W. Bush, the man who appointed John Ashcroft Attorney General of the United States, was right. The *Second Amendment* guarantees an individual right, not a collective one.

The constitutions of each of the individual Thirteen Colonies, long before they United as States, made it overwhelmingly clear that the right to own guns was a citizen's right, not a state's right.

Working with these colonial constitutions as foundational documents, the Framers of the *Bill of Rights* obviously agreed. There is no other logical conclusion but that they found it a key right to each human component of a free society. Indeed, that they considered it so important that they made it second on their long list of imperative individual rights, second only to free speech.

There is no reason to believe that what may be the ultimate document

of individual human rights somehow had a state's rights clause thrown in. Not logically, not historically, not legally.

It stretches believability past the breaking point to believe that a foundational document of individual human rights would include a clause that would allow a tyrannical government that had taken over a free people to command a tyrannical reserve military force within the very breast of America.

So, let me complete this long answer to Molly's question. What I think of John Ashcroft's opinion, the official opinion of the Office of the Attorney General of the United States, that the *Second Amendment* is an individual right, is this:

It's a good opinion. It's the right opinion. Anyone who says otherwise insults your intelligence, and mine, and that of a very long history of thinking Americans that goes back all the way to the Framers of the *Bill of Rights* itself. And, indeed, back beyond that.

John Ashcroft's opinion affirms the "obvious legislative intent" of those who wrote the *Second Amendment*. That obvious legislative intent was one that lies at the very core of what we call Justice: the protection of the innocent from evil.

And, as Daniel Webster said, "Justice is the highest concern of Man on Earth." Δ

A river rock shower

By Dorothy Ainsworth

I had always wanted a river rock shower. Who knows why? We all have our idiosyncrasies. Maybe because it just sounded like a beautiful idea. Maybe because it conjured up images of two lovers washing each other's hair to Rossini's

"Barber of Seville," surrounded by walls of a thousand stones, and the shampoo sitting on its own little rock ledge. But whatever the reason, I knew I was a hopeless romantic and would still want one, even when I got to the age where I should be wearing a helmet in the shower.

I finally got my chance to go for it while finishing up the rebuilding of my log house after the first one burned in 1995 (see *BHM* issue #38). It would have been much easier and cheaper to use tile, but I knew that if I built what I really wanted, I'd cry only once. So, I started in, not quite knowing where to begin.

Over the years I had collected a pile of small, smooth, flat river rocks, but cumulatively they were extremely heavy. Since this shower was in the loft bathroom, and even though the floor was supported by 4" x 10" beams, I'd have to consider weight.

I had heard of cultured stone (pumice and portland cement) cast from molds made from river rocks, but only half the weight. I looked in the yellow pages and found the local distributor for "Cultured Stone" products. They showed me samples and I was delighted to see that each stone looked exactly like a real river rock, but was flat on one side for ease in installation. They also gave me a leaflet of how-to instructions, but warned me that they had no data on showers so their 30-year warranty would not apply. I didn't care; I'd take the chance. Their stonework holds up outside in the rain. What's the diff?

I had already built the shower walls out of ¾" plywood attached to 2" x 4" studs (around a 3' x 5' shower pan) so I measured the square footage and ordered 9 boxes of their smallest stones called "skimmers." Each one was about the size of my clenched fist. Each box, called a "handipak," equaled 8 square feet and weighed about 90 lbs. The total cost was \$600.

Following the instructions, I installed a vapor barrier over the plywood. I chose roofer's "Stormshield"—tarpaper with a sticky backing—but regular tarpaper



The finished shower weighs a ton and cost about \$800.



Cultured stones, made of pumice and portland cement, weigh about half as much as river rocks.



Notched-trowel texturing in the mortar helps to “grab” the “battered rocks.”



Scratch coat going on over “Wonderboard” and metal lathe. The mesh creates a textured surface to “grab” the mortar.



Back wall finished, sides started. As one row sets up, you can go to the other side.



First row of river rocks cemented in.

or 6-mil plastic sheeting can be used instead.

Then I covered the plywood with cement board ("Wonderboard") and caulked the seams and screws, then fastened sheets of metal lath (2.5 lb. galvanized diamond mesh) to the cement board with small washers and screws. The mesh creates a textured surface to grab the mortar.

I was advised by the Cultured Stone tech line to apply a scratch coat of mortar $\frac{1}{2}$ "- $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick on all three walls of the shower first, texture it with a $\frac{1}{4}$ " notched trowel, and let it cure for at least 48 hours before laying up any river rocks. Using that method, I could take my time installing a few rows of rocks whenever I felt like it by mixing up a small batch of mortar each session to butter the rocks and press them against the scratch coat.

I bought six 94-lb. bags of their recommended Type S mortar and mixed up $\frac{1}{2}$ bag at a time to the consistency of peanut butter, dyed it a terra cotta color with iron oxide powder, and troweled it on with a tremendous expenditure of energy, but no real skill. A lot of it fell off and made a huge mess that included permanently staining my shoes to look like "feet of clay." Because cement starts to harden within one hour, there was no time to lollygag. I quickly developed my own technique for forcing it into

the metal mesh. Using rubber gloves of course, I scooped up balls of mortar and threw them as hard as I could at the mesh—"splat, splat, splat." After splatting on a row or two, I troweled it nice and smooth to about $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick, then "raked" it horizontally with the notched end of the trowel. Thank goodness no one saw me in action, but the end result was great.

Every night for a month, I worked a couple of hours on the shower. It became a late night ritual to mix up my bucket of mud and lay up a few rows of stones while listening to FOX news and the possible whereabouts of Osama bin Laden.

The first $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of the stone wall, starting from the bottom, requires squatting on one's haunches, and the last $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet requires perching on a step stool. There's only about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet of comfort zone in the whole process. I felt like a strange bird in a grotto with red droppings all around. Setting 1000 rocks used up 5 more 94-lb. bags of mortar and 25 lbs. of iron oxide powder.

Before I ever began the actual stonework part of the project, I had laid out all the river rocks in a mock shower frame on the floor. I thought it would be a good idea to choose and arrange the rocks in each row in advance and then transfer them to the shower. As it turned out, that time-

consuming step was not necessary. One can do just as well picking rocks out of the box as one goes, measuring each row laid out on the floor to make sure it corresponds to the wall measurement before cementing the rocks in.

It's aesthetically pleasing to alternate the big and small, fat and skinny, and flat and bulbous stones throughout the entire structure, to achieve a balanced look.

Because my log house is dominated by warm earthy colors (even my carpet is a deep red-orange), I did not want anything gray. Not only did I dye the mortar, but I painted the rocks with colors I mixed from acrylic craft paint. Since I wanted a natural look, and not the bright jelly-bean look, I toned all the colors with lots of white. That created a more realistic dusty look to the rocks. When they were all painted to my satisfaction, I sealed the walls (rocks and mortar) with a multi-purpose water-based sealer for concrete, tile, and masonry. The brand I chose only came in medium gloss (I wanted flat) so the rocks appear perpetually wet, but it's a nice look after all.

I'm happy with my 2000-pound, \$800 river rock shower. I'm so glad I didn't take the easy way out. My dream is now written in stone. Δ

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Build a graceful footbridge

By Harrison Stone

Tap your heels together three times and repeat after me, “There is no place like home—There is no place like home—There is no place like home, especially when you have H₂O.” Homemade ponds are very popular today, but if you are as lucky as we are to have a year-round stream running right through the middle of

your property, then there should be a prerequisite for doing something with it.

Some homeowners construct ponds and stock it with fish. There are some that will make a wetland to attract exotic wildlife and some may build a waterfall or a nice footbridge like we did. Whether it is home-built or natural, streams and ponds are very therapeutic and relaxing, especially after

coming home from a stressful day at work.

There were some considerations that went into designing this bridge. The first was obviously strength to withstand flood stages where the volume and current of the stream can erode or wash away any structure if given the right circumstance. The second was height, which is seven feet to the center of the bridge at normal stream water level. This will allow



Our homemade footbridge leans toward the “Asian” design because of the shallow banks. Whether you are building over a creek or a pond, the height does not have to be more than a few feet above water level.



The trusses were built in my basement workshop over the winter.

most obstacles to pass underneath the bridge without colliding into it. The third was for aesthetic quality. It compliments the landscape, giving the grounds a park-like view. Our bridge leans a little more toward the “oriental” or Asian design, primarily because of the shallow banks of the stream. It has a pleasing appearance and takes fewer risers to step up to the deck. This design will work for tributaries and small ponds as well. The height for homemade ponds would not have to be more than a few feet above the normal water level. This will depend on whether or not the pond is being fed or if the water is being recirculated.

After designing the basic structural drawing, I sat down to figure my materials. The bridge was built 95%

from #2 pressure-treated lumber which retards rotting and wood damage in an environment where there is constant moisture present.

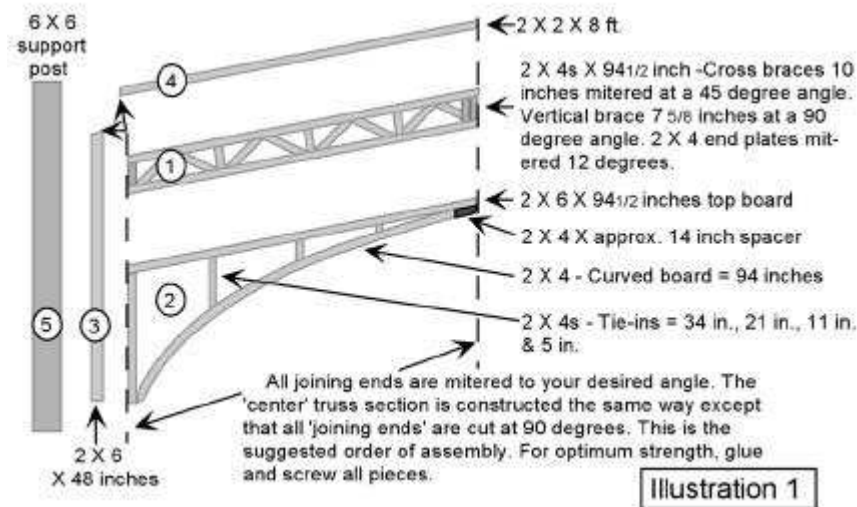
Initially, I hand-picked thirty 2 x 4 x 8 foot boards and stored them in my basement where I allowed them to dry out slowly. This is an important step for this will minimize shrinkage and warping once the support structure is put together. Another reason is that decking stain will adhere to dry lumber much better than wet. Very few nails were used in its construc-

tion, most everything being glued and screwed. Liquid Nails for outdoor construction was the primary glue. Two and a half-inch galvanized decking screws were used in the main construction unless longer ones were needed. Two and a half-inch Phillips Rustproof Durafast pre-painted screws were used on the actual deck and railings to prevent leaching and staining from screw oxidation.

The trusses were built in my basement workshop over the winter. These consist of six truss assemblies,



The first truss assembly mounted to the support post



all from 2 x 4s with the exception of the support ends and the bottoms of each truss which are 2 x 6s. Each truss has a series of small supports, sandwiched between two 2 x 4s at ten inches wide from outside to outside. Figure the angle of fall between the center truss assembly and the end of the outside truss assembly, (See Illustration 2) which can be from 8 to 12 degrees, more or less, determined by your design needs. This one is 12 degrees.

To get the lower board to curve consistently (Illustration 1 item 2), determine the curvature and figure the tie-in lengths. With a power saw, cross-

cut 1/2-inch deep grooves on the bottom face of the board that you will be curving and do this about every 8 inches apart. This will allow the board to give while bending and shaping it. I used four-foot pipe clamps to draw the board to the desired curved shape. Measure and cut four sets of four tie-ins, being sure to miter the bottom of each tie-in board so that it will flush-fit the curved support board. [NOTE: It is important that the main truss assemblies are built so that the inside of the assemblies are flush with the inside of the 6 x 6 support posts. (See Illustration 3.) This is so the steel plate can be used to tie the 6 x 6 post and the truss assembly together.]

Once you get one full truss assembly completed and you understand how you did it, then the rest will go together quickly. When all the trusses were completed, the sections were then temporarily mated, aligned, and 5/8-inch holes drilled through the mating 2 x 4 double plates for 1/2 x 7-inch lag bolts to be used later (See Illustration 2). You should number each truss section so that when it is time to assemble them they will match perfectly. Drilling a slightly larger hole is necessary for a little play to aid in aligning the sections once they go together over the water.

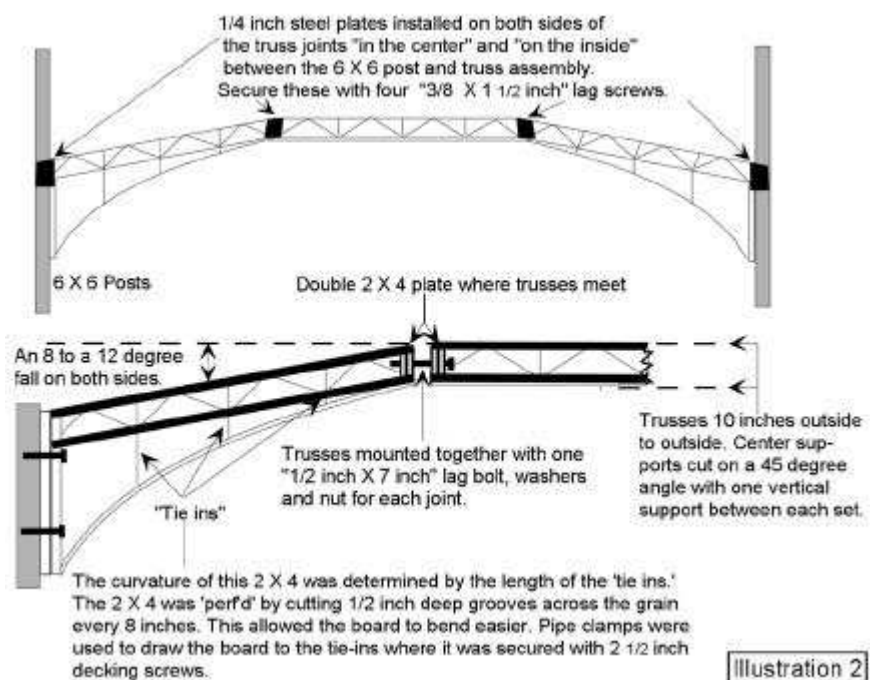
The structure requires 4 steel plates that tie the main support posts to the outside truss assembly and 8 plates that tie the center truss assemblies to the outside truss assemblies. (See Illustration 3.) While the trusses were laid out on the floor, cardboard templates were made for the 1/4-inch thick steel plates so that they could be cut and drilled at a local sheet metal shop. (NOTE: After the plates come back from the sheet metal shop, lightly sand all sides with fine sandpaper in a circular motion. Then wipe down with alcohol and follow that with a solution of warm soapy water. Rinse well and allow to dry. I used a metal primer made by Rustoleum, putting

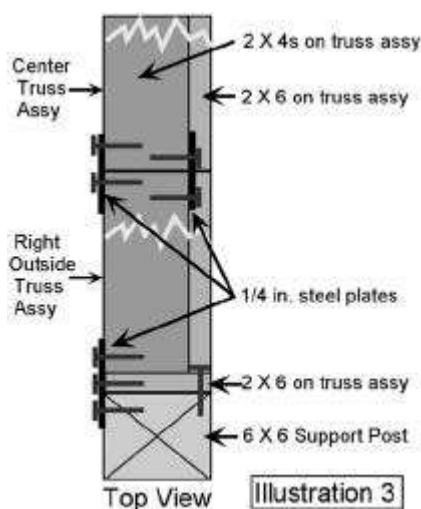


*The center truss was connected with a 1/2 x 7-inch galvanized bolt.
Two by fours give temporary support.*

two thin coats on and allowing it to dry for a day. A Rustoleum Flat Black for outdoors was used to finish it off. Several thin coats is much better than one heavy coat, for it will be less likely to peel.)

The sections were dismantled, stacked in a corner, and tie-wrapped together so that warping would be minimized until it was ready to go up. A week before we were to begin work on the bridge, my wife filled the cross-cuts and screw holes with wood





putty. She sanded everything down with medium grit sandpaper, which also opens the grain of the wood for good adherence for stain, and she put two coats of Severe Weather Deep-Charcoal Solid decking stain on the sections. The first coat will soak in quickly, especially if the lumber has been allowed a good drying-out period.

The bridge was now ready for assembly and the fun part begins. The nice thing about a project like this is it gives you an excuse to play in the water. The best parallel position of the bridge to the stream was determined and staked for digging the footers for the main 6 x 6-inch support posts. These were twelve feet in length because we didn't know how deep we would need to go before hitting firm ground. The average depth we went down was three feet. This was a plus because the freeze line in our area is two feet minimum. The bottom of the hole was still a little soft so we dumped some ¾-inch stone in the hole and tamped it until it was firmer. Being so close to the stream, we had to contend with rapid water seepage into the hole. My wife bailed while I mixed the concrete. We dumped a dry bag in the hole and set the post down in. While the water was busy being absorbed by the dry concrete, we filled the hole with

mixed concrete. The post was leveled and securely staked with a couple of boards and left to set up for a day.

The next morning, the first truss assembly was mounted to the support post. A pipe-clamp was used to position and hold the truss assembly to the support post. Four pilot holes were drilled through the 2 x 6 truss assembly frame for ½ x 5-inch lag screws. (See Illustration 3.) Then a ¼-inch steel mounting plate was attached to the inside truss and post, giving an added degree of strength since this is a 24-foot single span bridge with no center supports. The center truss was connected with a ½ x 7-inch galvanized bolt with two large flat washers, a lock washer, and a nut. A temporary 2 x 4 was nailed to the center truss to hold it up until it could be aligned and tightened to the first truss. The third angled outside truss was attached to the center one with the same method and supported with two 2 x 4s until it could be attached to the 6 x 6 support post.

The second 6 x 6 support post hole was dug. The post was placed in the hole and clamped to the third angle truss using the pipe clamps. In order to get both posts and all three trusses in a straight line, I ran a nylon string from one post to the other and made fine adjustments using my 4-foot level on the center truss and my 2-foot level on the support post. Once level and straightness was achieved, we attached the post to the truss assembly as before. We bailed the water out of the hole and filled it with mixed concrete. The post was then secured so that it wouldn't move until the concrete set up. The second span was constructed the same way, making sure that it was square and parallel to the first span.

In the next phase, I chose to do the decking because I wanted to get the structure rigid as quickly as possible. Because the width of the truss spans are 36 inches, I had to solve the problem of putting the 5/4 x 6-inch deck-

ing on without having to use a center truss or a plain 2 x 6-inch floor joist. Either one of these would have taken away the effect and aesthetic quality of the structure. The solution was to mount a 2 x 2-inch wood strip along the outside edge of both truss spans. (See Illustration 1 item 4 and Illustration 4.) NOTE: These 2 x 2s can be put on at the time of truss assembly or you can wait until you begin to put the decking on. Next, a 2 x 4 was cut and screwed to the top of the trusses, face up, between the 2 x 2s. (NOTE: You will need to figure a spacing between these initial 2 x 4s so that the 5/4 x 6-inch decking boards will align properly in order to have a small gap between them.) Another 2 x 4 was measured and cut to mount to the bottom of the first 2 x 4 and would actually be mounted between the trusses. Glue and decking screws were used to tie these two together. The bottom 2 x 4 was toenailed with 8d galvanized nails to the trusses for additional support.

Finally, a 5/4 x 6-inch decking board, with a 3-inch overhang on each side, was screwed to the top trusses with the Phillips Rustproof Durafast screws and the 2 x 4 floor joists. The top decking board must be centered over the bottom joists because of the width difference between them. When it was finished, each deck plank was 4¼ inches thick. This was necessary because the grain of the wood is facing up horizontally instead of in a normal vertical position which would have set the bottom of the joist 1½ inches below the top truss board. This would have shown through the angle supports on the truss, detracting from the design quality of the bridge.

Once the decking was complete, the step-riser support posts were done the same as the main supports, the only difference being that they are 4 x 4s instead of 6 x 6s. Step-risers were made out of 2 x 8s and the same 5/4 x 6-inch decking boards were used for



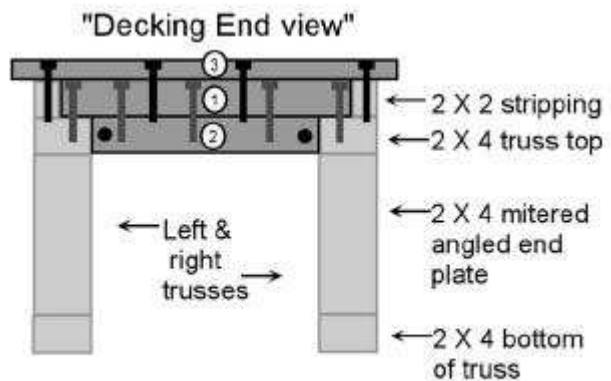
5/4 x 6-inch decking boards were supported without having to install a center truss or floor joist, which would have detracted from the aesthetic look.

the steps. Each step is 10 inches deep so I had to use two boards and rip them at equal widths. I left a small gap to allow water to seep between the decking board steps.

The 4 x 4 railing posts were bolted to the top center of each truss assembly. The railings and pickets were constructed of 2 x 2s and 2 x 4s. The center 4 x 4 railing support posts were bolted from beneath the decking with 3/8 x 4-inch lag bolts. The 4 x 4s on the center joints were cut and mitered to rest over the steel plates. A 3/8-inch hole was drilled through the plates and a 5-inch lag bolt was used to mount the support post.

A 3-inch decking screw was used to help firm up the post by securing it to the decking from underneath. The top of each post was cut the same dis-

tance from the bridge decking so that all of the posts were uniform. Small pieces of decking scrap wood were tacked on top of the posts until staining and permanent caps were completed. This keeps excess moisture from settling into the exposed portion on the top of the post where checking is likely to occur. The wood was allowed to dry out for a few months. Also by exposing the new wood to the elements of weather, the grain will open up, allowing the decking stain to adhere to the wood more effectively and last much longer. After the bridge was allowed to properly dry out (6 to 9 months), the unstained wood needed to be thoroughly scrubbed and rinsed before staining. A good deck-wash will suffice. Before washing, we draped a



"Order of deck assembly"

- ①- 2 X 4 glued and screwed to truss top with 2 1/2 in. decking screws.
- ②- 2 X 4 measured and cut to fit between trusses. It is then placed beneath the "number 1" board, glued and then screwed. For additional support, you can 'toe-nail' this one into the truss top.
- ③- 5/4 X 6 in. deck flooring screwed to the 2 X 2 and the "number 1" board with Phillips Rust Proof Durafast 2 1/2 in. decking screws. Glue not recommended in case this board needs replacing in the future. Because the top decking board is 6 inches and the board beneath it is 4 inches, you will need to center them before screwing them together.

Illustration 4

large tarp under the bridge so that the chemicals wouldn't contaminate the stream. The decking, rails, and main support posts were then stained with Severe Weather Bark semi-transparent decking stain. The step-risers and supports were stained with the same Severe Weather Charcoal-Black Solid Decking Stain. This gives the bridge an eye-catching contrasting color between the black supports that suggests wrought iron and the warm bark brown semi-transparent that suggests a rich looking wood tone. Several truckloads of surge stone were hauled down to the bridge and placed between the concrete pads and the stream to control erosion.

Now you have completed a structure that has three elements: One is that it serves a purpose and provides a need. Two, it has a nice aesthetic quality, making it pleasing to the eye. And three, it will add value to your



The total length of the bridge is 34 feet and materials cost was \$1,800.

Materials

78 - 2 x 4 x 8s
 20 - 2 x 4 x 10s
 32 - 2 x 2 x 8s
 46 - 5/4 x 6 x 8s
 2 - 2 x 8 x 12s
 8 - 2 x 6 x 8s
 4 - 6 x 6 x 12s
 6 - 4 x 4 x 8s
 4 - 4 x 4 x 6s
 12 lbs. of 2½-inch galvanized decking screws
 7 lbs. of Phillips Durafast pre-painted rustproof 2½-inch decking screws
 2 lbs. of 8d galvanized nails
 6 large tubes of outdoor Liquid Nails construction glue
 12 - ¼-inch-thick custom steel plates
 Various lag bolts and screws
 14 - 80 lb. bags of concrete
 1 gallon Severe Weather Charcoal Black solid stain
 2 gallons of Severe Weather Bark semi-transparent decking stain
 14 post caps
 2 tons of surge stone

property. Our home is on a hill overlooking a rushing stream that meanders through the woods and under the bridge. The sight is picturesque and the sound is very relaxing.

The total length of the bridge is 34 feet and materials cost was \$1,800.

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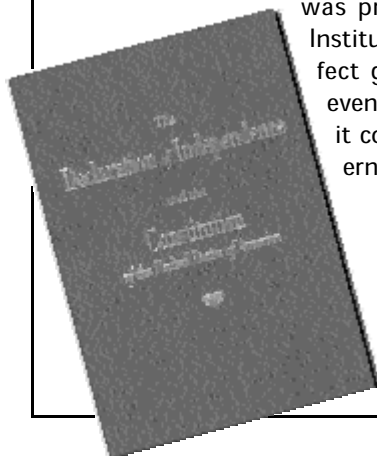


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(Harrison Stone has also written a sci-fi novel called "Dark Side Of the Moon." To sample the book, go to www.byharrison-stone.com or call 1-888-280-7715.) Δ

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By Alice Brantley Yeager
Photos by James O. Yeager

The fall garden



Every locality has nut trees of some sort. In the South our main interest is pecans. A basket of pecans will yield several pints of kernels for use in lots of recipes. This is the Elliott pecan, our favorite. It is a round pecan, has great flavor, and is always well filled out.

When you're a child and read certain stories and poems over and over, particularly with the guidance of a parent, they quietly become part of your make-up and accompany you throughout your life. One such story is about the ant and the grasshopper, the ant being the thrifty example and the grasshopper being just the opposite. No one wants to be like the grasshopper.

There are other stories and examples of looking out for the future, and one real life disaster was the Great Depression that came along in the 1930s. People who were not even born at that time have heard enough about the Depression days to realize it was a time of vast economical upheaval. We have had recessions and bad times since then, but nothing that has lasted as long and reduced so many folks to poverty level.

Probably one reason that children growing up during the thirties didn't realize how poor they were was because everyone else, with a few exceptions, was poor, too. Folks counted their pennies, darned already-darned socks, made their own clothing, did a great deal of canning and somehow survived. Many of the jobless sought governmental help and went to work for the Civilian Conservation Corps, The National Relief Association, and other government-backed relief agencies. Then there were those who bought an awful lot of sugar and became targets for the diligent federal employees known as revenueurs, whose astute reasoning was that no one could possibly need that much sugar for jellies and jams.

This survival period was not a pleasant one, but it drove home the fact that people are resourceful and can make-do with a lot less than we have nowadays. One thing in com-



Top: German Head tomatoes are very juicy, but since they're pink, they don't make red juice. Instead of discarding these big flavorful tomatoes, pick them ripe and mix them with your red tomatoes. That is, if you insist on red juice.
Above: Juliet Hybrid is a new plum type tomato and will bear right on into fall.
Don't discard tomatoes with blemishes or cracks. Turn them into juice.

mon that most people had was a garden. There were a lot of seed savers in those days as not everyone could afford to place a seed order with W. Atlee Burpee, Henry Field, or any of the other companies doing their best to stay afloat. If a neighbor gave you a handful of cornfield bean seed, you took good care of them until they

could be planted amongst your stalks of corn. Hybrids were almost unheard of, so one could be pretty sure seeds would produce as expected and not "run out" as the saying goes.

Gardens were the norm and all families had one if they had any space at all. Children accompanied their parents to the garden and learned first

hand how to pick beans, pull beets, deal with squash borers and Colorado potato beetles. Not everyone greeted the work with enthusiasm, particularly the inevitable preserving process that involved hot kitchens and sweaty brows. Once the summer weather was gone and folks began to use their supply of home grown food, things took a more pleasant turn. There's nothing like the aroma of vegetables coming together in homemade soups, stews, and gumbos. Another heavenly scent is that of fruit pies—apple, cherry, peach—cooling on a sideboard.

Nowadays a lot of time is spent on ferrying children from activity to activity—various sports, band practice, dance classes, karate and on and on. For some folks, the supermarkets are their chief suppliers for produce, as they don't have time to plant and harvest. This is sad, as they don't really get the fun out of seeing their efforts pay off in nutritious food as well as cutting down on the grocery bill. Those of us who know better look forward to the delicious vegetables and fruits that we raise ourselves and we take comfort in knowing we're not alone. Gardening is now the number one outdoor activity although not all of it concerns food gardening.

Gardening is not confined to the rush-rush of spring planting when gardeners are almost desperate to get things into the ground before warm weather comes on. In some parts of our country, gardening is almost year-round. However for the rest of us, we take it all in stride planting early spring and summer crops as soon as weather permits. When days begin to shorten in mid-summer, we prepare to plant our fall vegetables—greens, onions, turnips, etc.

Fall is usually a more pleasant time to be in the garden than during hot weather. We may have to do some watering until fall showers come along, but we manage and those fall vegetables have a flavor all their own. Tomato plants that have managed to

survive the hot weather take on renewed vigor and provide us with the best tasting tomatoes of the entire gardening season. They may not look as perfect as the first tomatoes of the summer, but they're strong on flavor. Who cares what they looked like when blemishes are removed and they are either canned or used fresh in the kitchen? It's the goodness that counts.

The last tomatoes of the season are probably your best bet for enjoying fresh tomatoes. After Jack Frost puts a chill on the garden, you can be sure that those tomatoes shipped in from wherever are not going to come close to giving you the quality you have become accustomed to.

You should become familiar with the tomatoes that perform best in your area and are least disease prone. These are the ones you can count on to go through the hot season and come out winners in the fall. There is a great deal of publicity being given to the heirloom varieties—Brandywine, Rutgers, Marglobe, Mortgage Lifter—but we have learned by experience that these are not disease resistant when it comes to various blights and viruses that seem to plague our area (Southwest Arkansas). For us, it is better to select hybrids that have resistance to nematodes, tobacco mosaic virus, verticillium wilt, and so on. This resistance is indicated by bold letters shown along with the variety names—VNT, VFFNT, etc. Most seed catalogs will list a key at the beginning of the tomato section and, if you know there are problems with growing tomatoes in your area, it would be wise to select resistant varieties.

Barring some unforeseen disaster such as thrips, tomatoes are easy to raise. (The thrips wiped out all tomato crops in our area a few years ago and we haven't seen another thrip since then.) Just give the plants a sunny spot, loose fertile soil with pH of 6.0-7.0, plenty of water during dry

spells, tall supports for the indeterminate ones and tomato cages for the determinate varieties. Keep plants mulched and free of weeds and stand by with a harvest basket on your arm.

If you'd like to raise some new plants for the fall, collect some side shoots or suckers from the tomato plants that seem to be doing well in the summer. Put the suckers in a quart jar of water and place them in a cool spot not in direct sunlight and it won't be long before you see roots begin to form. These may be planted when several long roots are present. Plant them just as you would any other tomato plant but keep them protected from the sun for a few days to avoid sun scald. In no time these cuttings will be growing and making blossoms.

When you already have about all of the canned tomatoes of various sorts that you want, think about making tomato juice out of those last ripe tomatoes of the season. (See recipe.) There is nothing like the taste of good tomato juice from your own garden.

There are many other pleasures to be had from a fall garden. A variety of fresh, tender greens mixed together will provide some delicious meals not only cooked, but used in salads, too. Greens will generally survive early light frosts but are best used before any hard frosts come along. Then they toughen and quality is poor.

We like to grow mustard-spinach, Tokyo Cross Hybrid turnips, and Florida broadleaf mustard. Mixing these greens together produces a blending of flavors that turns many a person into a greens lover. (See recipe.) Also, we have plants that aphids avoid. I remember the days of the purple top turnip and others that drew aphids like magnets and much time was spent washing and washing the leaves to get rid of the aphids. I appreciate plants that don't require diligent inspection to ready them for cooking.

Some seed sources

Cornfield Beans
R. H. Shumway's
335 S. High Street
Randolph, WI 53956

Mustard-spinach
Pinetree Garden Seeds
Box 300
New Gloucester, ME 04260

Juliet Hybrid Tomato
Carried by most seed companies

Tokyo Cross Hybrid Turnip
W. Atlee Burpee & Co.
Warminster, PA 18974

German Head Tomato
Tomato Growers Supply Co.
P.O. Box 2237
Ft. Myers, FL 33902

Florida Broadleaf Mustard
W. Atlee Burpee & Co.

Totally Tomatoes
P.O. Box 1626
Augusta, GA 30903

Most greens are easy to grow, as they will do well in any good garden soil. Seeds may be planted in rows or broadcast in beds. We have raised beds, so it would be easy to broadcast, but I prefer rows as it is easy to mulch the plants when they are a few inches high. The mulch keeps rain from splashing dirt up on the leaves making them a chore to clean when they are picked for use. One thing to avoid is too-close planting of seeds. This gives the option of having to thin the young plants or have spindly crowded plants that really never can reach their potential. Greens with usable roots such as turnips need room to develop. Harvested turnips will keep several weeks or months, depending on variety, if cleaned of all dirt and refrigerated.

By all means, have some fresh green onions and lettuce in your garden to enjoy in salads. If you live where winters aren't severe, you may

be able to use these throughout the winter. If not, at least enjoy them while you can. These are also easy to raise in most gardens and require about the same soil and care as greens. Be sure not to crowd these plants as they won't do well if grown too close together.

From the garden branch out to other fall possibilities. In almost all parts of the United States fall brings on a horde of ripe fruits and nuts. In the South one of our pleasures is to avail ourselves of a winter's supply of pecans. We are lucky to live near a number of pecan growers. Sometimes there's a crop failure due to drought, but we offset that by buying a double supply in case next year's crop isn't too plentiful. Pecans are shelled and put in freezer bags. Frozen, they'll keep indefinitely.

Notice how many recipes call for nuts of one kind or another, but unless you need a specific flavor such as black walnut, nuts are versatile and can be substituted for each other. One of our favorites is the Elliot pecan. It's a round papershell pecan with a good tasting kernel and never seems to have trouble with shriveled kernels as you sometimes find in the Stuarts or Desirables. However we have yet to find a domestic pecan that can surpass the native pecan in flavor. Everyone should have a winter's supply of whatever is available from local orchards. These nuts are sold freshly gathered, contrary to those stale ones from some markets.

If you only buy enough to keep the nut bowl supplied, avoid staleness by keeping the nuts in a cool place until ready to use and don't crack them ahead of time. Kernels will lose flavor and dry out. Generally speaking, nuts are very nutritious eaten raw as they are good sources of protein, calcium, iron, phosphorus, and potassium plus some vitamins. They are, however, a little high in calories.

Fall fruits are some of the best flavored of the growing season. Apples,



Florida Broadleaf mustard (top) and Tokyo Cross turnips and greens (above) make a delightful taste treat cooked together.

pears, native fruits such as persimmons and muscadines make great additions to our food supply. Down here the fall season usually begins with grape harvesting and there are a number of vineyards particularly in the hilly part of the area. Prices are usually within reason and the vineyards have a variety of grapes. These make great jelly, jam and juice. Enjoy eating fresh grapes in bunches or in salads, as they are reported to be a good body builder and cleanser.

We decided a long time ago that we were boiling away our juice when making jelly the old fashioned way, so we switched to using Sure-Jell. The flavor is retained and so is the

quantity. Just follow the directions on the package.

Of all the fall fruits available, the most popular has to be the apple. It has been around a long time, even being mentioned in Genesis as the downfall of man and woman. That was a dirty trick to play on the apple which probably didn't look much like our Red Delicious of today. But, one thing for certain, the apple has redeemed itself. It is highly regarded as a nutrition source and is used in ways too numerous to count. One of our favorite breacktime snacks when traveling is to stop at a restaurant advertising homemade apple pie and have a warm slice with a cup of hot

coffee. Usually, we're not disappointed. At home, one of our favorite wintertime desserts is apple crisp. (See recipe.)

Autumn is a traditional time of harvest not only for humans but for wildlife as well. Many diligent little animals are busy storing their winter's supply of food. Just watch the squirrels and chipmunks. Various acorns, American beautyberries, huckleberries, grasses, wild crabapples, etc., contribute to the sustenance of migrating wildlife as well as those that remain in the area. One thing we should never do is to treat our native plants as dispensable. Protecting them protects a lot of nature's own.

So, when you finish getting your own fall garden in order, roam the countryside and see what you can find at the roadside stands or along abandoned places where wild things grow. You'll be surprised at the diversity you can put in your pantry.

Happy hunting!

Recipes

Tomato juice

tomatoes
lemon juice
salt

Rule of thumb: About five pounds of tomatoes will yield two quarts of juice.

Use only fully ripe tomatoes (no over-ripes) and remove all blemishes, spots and stems being sure that tomatoes are clean. Any overlooked rotten spot can ruin your tomato juice. If there are any old healed-up cracks, remove those, too.

Cut full size tomatoes into quarters and small ones, such as cherry or plum, into halves. Place in large pan with a tiny bit of water to help prevent sticking. (Use stainless steel or porcelain cookware—no aluminum.) Heat to boiling, stirring often and then cut heat back to simmer about 10 minutes. As soon as tomatoes are

soft, remove from heat and extract juice by pressing through a food mill or sieve. If you want a clearer product free of pulp, drain juice through cheesecloth.

Reheat juice to boiling and, because tomatoes are considered low-acid, stir in 1 teaspoon lemon juice per quart of juice or ½ teaspoon per pint. Put hot juice into sterilized jars leaving ½ inch head space for quarts and ¼ inch for pints. Add 1 teaspoon salt per quart and ½ teaspoon per pint.

Seal with hot snap lids and rings that have also been sterilized in boiling water. Process both quarts and pints in a boiling water bath for 35 minutes. Start counting time when water begins to boil. Altitude plays a part in the processing time, so if you live 1,000 feet above sea level or higher, count an extra 2 minutes per thousand feet.

If you are using a pressure canner, follow manufacturer's instructions. If you are using an ordinary canner, have enough heated water to cover the sealed jars with 2 inches of water. Place jars on rack and lower into the hot water. Be sure jars are not touching. If you do not have a rack, a folded clean kitchen towel may be placed in the bottom of the canner. Lift the lid occasionally to be sure jars are still covered with water. Add more boiling water if necessary.

Place processed jars on a wooden board, towels, or something to prevent them from coming in contact with anything cold or damp that might cause the hot jars to crack. Also keep the jars slightly separated for air circulation. Cover the jars with enough towels to let them cool slowly and then listen for the happy sound of lids snapping as they pull a vacuum and seal. After the cooling-off period has passed, check the lids to see that all jars are sealed. Just press down in the middle and, if there is no give to the lid, you have a jar of juice ready for the pantry. If there is a puffy lid,

put it in the refrigerator and use it within a few days.

Pot of greens

greens
turnips, cleaned and diced
green onions, cleaned and
chopped
bacon or other cured meat
salt and pepper as desired

Gather a good quantity of greens as they will cook down considerably. I prefer a mixture of greens as the blend of flavors is delicious. Turnip greens, mustard, mustard-spinach, radish, beet—whatever you have that is tender and not past its prime.

Inspect greens for any insects and remove tough stems. This is easily done by stripping the stems from the greens wherever the tough stem begins. Wash the greens thoroughly in cool water and drain in a colander. While greens are draining, fry several pieces of bacon until almost crisp and cut in small pieces. Set these aside along with some of the drippings to combine with greens.

Put greens in a stainless steel or porcelain pot (don't use aluminum) and add about 2-3 cups of water. Add chopped onions, turnips, bacon, and drippings and bring to a simmer. Greens will wilt as they cook. Stir occasionally to keep them from forming a mass. They will probably be tender in 20-25 minutes. Taste to see if you might like a bit of seasoning added. Lift greens from pot, draining away liquid and serve hot. Greens should never be served without that glorious cornbread, and the crispier, the better. It comes in pre-mixed packages nowadays, but I like to make it from scratch.

A fringe benefit of a pot of greens is the water in which they are cooked which now becomes "pot likker." A lot of us like to simply drink a bit of that on the side. Takes us back to the old days.

Crusty cornbread

2/3 cup yellow corn meal
1/3 cup unbleached flour
1/3 cup wholewheat flour
1 Tbsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 egg, beaten
1/3 cup whole milk
4 Tbsps. melted shortening or
bacon/ham drippings

Sift dry ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Blend in the wet ingredients until mixture is smooth. Pour mixture into an 8 inch, hot iron skillet and bake at 400° F. oven about 20 minutes or until light brown and done in the middle. Serve hot right from the skillet.

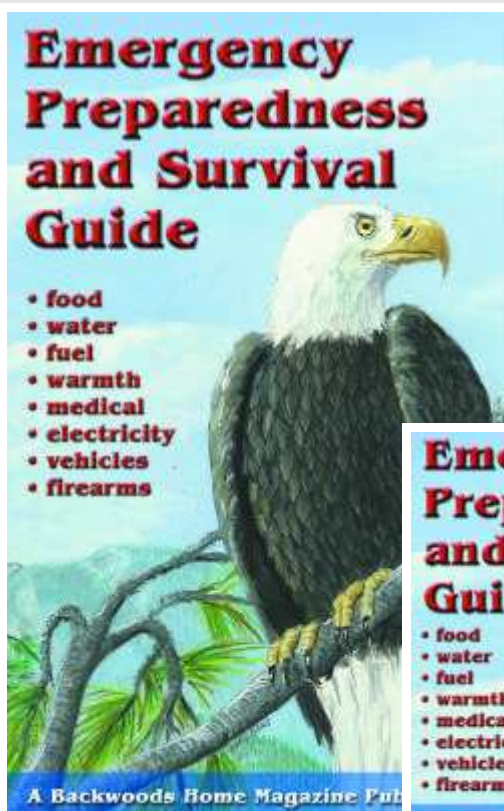
If you want even more great flavor, use buttermilk in place of the whole milk. Reduce baking powder to 1½ teaspoons and add a half teaspoon of baking soda.

Apple crisp

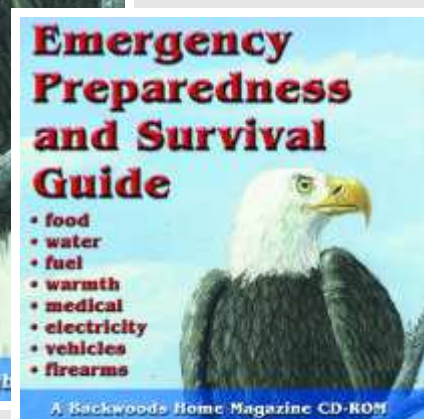
6-8 medium size pie apples
(such as Granny Smith or
Jonathan)
¾ cup unbleached flour
1 cup brown sugar
½ teaspoon nutmeg
½ cup butter or oleo
½ teaspoon cinnamon

Wash apples, pat dry with non-fuzzy kitchen towel or paper towel-
ing. Don't peel apples, but core them
and remove seeds and seed cavities.
Slice in half inch slices vertically and
place in well greased medium size
deep baking dish. Work rest of ingredi-
ents together with a pastry blender
or fork until crumbly. Pack mixture
closely over apples. If apples are dry
type apples, you may do well to add
a couple of tablespoons of water. Bake
in preheated 350°-375° F. oven about
45-50 minutes. Serve warm with dabs
of thick whipped cream or enjoy
plain. Serves 6 people. Δ

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Think of it this way...

By John Silveira

The Coming American Dictatorship revisited

Mac's back. After a long absence our poker-playing friend from southern California, O.E. MacDougal, walked into the Oregon offices of *Backwoods Home Magazine*.

Poof, and there he was. No phone call, no e-mail, no letter saying he was on his way, no nothin.' We hadn't even heard from him for at least six months. Then, after an almost two-year absence, he just walked through the front door as if he'd stepped out for lunch and had just come back.

For a moment, I didn't even realize who he was. Then, just as it dawned on me, I heard Dave yell from the other side of the office, "Mac!"

Mac smiled faintly as Dave crossed the room and I rose from my desk.

There were handshakes all around and Mac settled into one of the stuffed chairs while Dave and I returned to our desks.

"You look tired," I said.

"Once I left Ventura, I drove non-stop until I got here. Made a couple of stops for gas and another couple to eat."

"No sleep-stops?" I asked.

He shook his head no.

"Wine? A beer?" Dave asked.

Mac looked at the clock. "It's about that time. I'll have whatever you're having."

Dave looked at me as if to ask if I wanted to imbibe and I nodded, and he went to the refrigerator and pulled out a bottle of Concha Y Toro Merlot and popped the cork. He got three glasses from the table near the refrigerator and poured some into each, then passed them around.

We all sat back and there followed some catching up on the news. Mostly it was news about guys Mac and Dave knew way back when.

"What brought you up here?" Dave finally asked.

"I just wanted to get away. Do some fishing. Maybe even do some hiking and see where I may go hunting in the fall."

"Well, we'd be glad to have you come back up," Dave said.

"By the way," he added, "we ran an eight-part series on the stuff you talked about last time you were here. We called it *The Coming American Dictatorship*."

"I saw a few installments," Mac said. He glanced at me and smiled because my byline was on it.

"It was generally well received," Dave said.

"Well, that's nice to hear," Mac responded.

"But we got some letters, I added, "and I spoke with some people who either disagreed with or objected to things you said."

He nodded as if this was something to be expected. "If most people actually agreed with me," he said, "the world would be different."

"If we have some time while you're here, I'd like to do a wrap up," I said.

"Do what?" he asked.

"You know, answer some of the objections people have."

"Like what?" Mac asked.

"Among them some people have said you take the *Constitution* too literally. I've talked with people who say our interpretation of the *Constitution* has to evolve."



John Silveira

Without saying anything, he looked at me funny, as if expecting further explanation.

"You know," I said, "times have changed. They say we need some progress. We can't be solving today's problems with a document that's 200 years old."

"We live in a more dangerous world," I added.

"That's what they're saying?"

"Well, some of them are. They're saying there have never been so many threats to the United States as there are today. The world we live in is more dangerous today than the world of our Founding Fathers."

"Let me give you a different perspective on this," he said:

- In 1776, this country went to war with what was then the world's only superpower.

- We lived on a narrow strip of land along the Atlantic seaboard. For better or worse we had numerous wars, right here on what is today American soil, with the original inhabitants, the Indians.

- We feared the English, the French, and the Spanish. In fact, we feared all of the European powers.

- There were no police forces to speak of.

- The average person only lived into his or her 40s.

- No one knew if the United States would succeed or fail, and virtually every monarchy wanted us to ultimately fail, even if they were temporarily lending us their support during their struggles with each other. The thought of a true democratic republic succeeding, never mind flourishing, was a threat to monarchies everywhere.

"Despite all the dangers, despite living in a dangerous and uncertain world when all of the world's powers wanted democracy and the concept of natural rights to fail, we gave ourselves a relatively weak central government and allowed more rights than any people had ever enjoyed in all of Western history.

"If anything, the world of 225 years ago was a more dangerous and uncertain world, and if there was ever a time with *excuses* to have a strong central government, a time to limit rights, that was it.

"Today we're the world's only superpower. No one can defeat us. Even a nuclear bomb placed in one of our major cities couldn't defeat us. We have never been as secure from foreign forces as we are at this very moment. Yet, many people feel as though now we have to give up our freedoms.

"The irony is today, of all times, is the time when we should be enjoying our rights. Instead, we're talking about how dangerous our rights are."

He hesitated. "I will, however, say one thing: if we live in dangerous times today it's not because of terrorists."

"Then who is it because of?" Dave asked.

"Our own government."

"How can you say that?" I asked.

"It's been that way throughout all of history. The biggest enemy of mankind has not been foreign invaders, or terrorists, or serial killers, or muggers on the street. The most dangerous threat to humanity is almost always our own governments. Hitler killed million of Germans including German Jews. Stalin oversaw the deaths of 20 to 80 million Soviet citizens, Mao another 60 million in China. The Khmer Rouge of Cambodia killed 3 million Cambodians, and who knows how many people Idi Amin killed in Uganda? These aren't isolated cases. All throughout history the primary killer of people has always been their own kind. Governments have been responsible for more deaths to the governed than war or plague. And the people who are most likely to deprive you of your rights and freedoms are your own government. Terrorists aren't going to suspend your rights to free speech, the press, the right to bear arms, or jury trials. Neither are Colombian drug lords nor muggers. It's John Ashcroft, Charles Schumer, George Bush, Tom Daschle, and their kind who will do it.

"Now, since 9/11, we've turned to our government for 'safety' and a large number of Americans have expressed their willingness to give up their rights—and my rights, too—for the promise of that safety. We're being told we have to limit our rights and grant more power to politicians, bureaucrats, and the police. We have to give more power to our government. There's a certain amount of irony in that."

"But *we* can trust our government," I said. "It's not like other governments."

"We can't trust an organization that at one time both harbored and fostered slavery and, later, segregation; that abrogated its treaties with the original inhabitants of this continent—the Indians—whenever it chose to; that threw Japanese-

Americans in concentration camps for no other reason than their ethnic background; that currently imprisons a larger percentage of its own citizens than any country in the world; that, for the last 30 years, has held the official position of government that property rights of the citizens don't exist...I could go on all day, but it would be senseless. Suffice it to say that this country has a perfectly abominable record and cannot be trusted any more than any other country's government."

"But, compared to other countries, it could be worse," I said.

"Of course it could be worse. But do you think it's not worse because of the innate goodness of our politicians and bureaucrats, or do you think it's because of the restraints our *Constitution* has placed upon them?"

"I'd say, it's the Constitution we should trust," Dave said.

I didn't say anything.

Mac said, "We, the American people, should keep in mind that our *Constitution*, when duly followed and enforced, is a *restraint* on our government and a document that *protects* our freedom.

"And it is a mistake to give up any of our rights or to relax our vigilance against our own government, even in light of 9/11."

The Federal Reserve

We sat silently for a few moments. Then I said, "One reader says you don't understand the Federal Reserve, that it's not federally controlled. He said you seem to think it's a part of the federal government, but that it's not. It's a corporation owned by the wealthy. So there's no government solution."

He looked at me curiously.

"I don't care who owns the Federal Reserve. If you go against its edicts, the Rockefellers and Rothschilds are not coming out to your house to visit you. It'll be federal agents. Without Federal backing, the Federal Reserve

is powerless. Even those who take that reader's position realize that if the American people would just get control of their government, arguments about the Federal Reserve become moot."

"That makes sense," Dave said.

A universal draft

"We also got an e-mail from a fellow who said...well, here, let me read it to you.

"Sorry, but I cannot agree with John Silveira's position endorsing involuntary servitude (or 'citizens' army' as he puts it) in Part VII of his Coming of the American Dictatorship in issue #72.

"I agree we need a smaller military, but conscription gives a president a blank check for unlimited manpower in military adventures. Does anyone think if there had been no draft, Presidents Kennedy, Johnson, and Nixon could have pursued the immoral war in Vietnam? For anyone calling oneself a 'libertarian' a military draft should be an anathema! The armed services should be smaller, but they should always be filled with VOLUNTEERS. Conscription is one gateway to tyranny.

"It's signed by a guy named Richard Clark."

Mac nodded. "The war in Vietnam—and you must understand that it wasn't legally a war because no war was declared—was possible because we *only* sent children. If 30, 40, and 50-year-olds had been called up, that war would never have happened.

"Furthermore, the Vietnam War ended *because* of the draft, not in spite of it. Young people took to the streets because they now had a direct stake in it.

"Now, if our military had been like the Swiss, where people up into their 50s are involved, Vietnam wouldn't have even started in the first place.

"The military service I'm talking about, where every man serves, is

quite a bit different from drafting 18-year-olds while the vast majority of mature adults stay home.

"And, just for the record, the small volunteer army Mr. Clark is proposing is what we had in the 19th century, and we were in a state of constant war—with the Indians, with the Mexican-American War, the Civil War, and the War with Spain thrown in. Try to imagine how popular warfare would have been if guys from 18 to 55 had to go. Particularly the wars against the Indians.

"On the other hand, if a universal citizen army, such as the Swiss have, was the door that leads to immoral wars, then the Swiss would have been involved in more wars than anyone. They're not involved in any and haven't been for centuries.

"However, having a military made up of volunteers, which is exactly what we have today, hasn't brought about the kind of world Mr. Clark wants, nor has it stopped military adventures by the United States.

"As to involuntary servitude, what Mr. Clark and many other libertarians want is the ultimate in welfare. Instead of 'give me your money, it's 'go die for me.' I, on the other hand, believe there are certain duties, such as jury duty and responding to a subpoena that, though they could be con-

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strued as 'involuntary servitude,' are necessary to the functioning of a free society. And I hold that universal military service is part of our responsibilities if we want a freer society.

He thought another moment. "Furthermore, a professional military is dangerous. I know the Libertarian argument, that we'd get enough volunteers if someone were to invade our country. And it's true. But that's not even close to my point. But if you agree with me that the biggest threat to people since the beginning of civilization has not been wild animals, thugs in the streets, or invading armies, but our own governments, then a professional army must be seen as a danger.

"I believe today's so-called volunteer army will become evermore the tool of foreign adventures and in the future it will be easier for a President to turn the military on the people.

Containing bureaucracy

Again I rummaged around on the mess on my desk, looking for another letter, but I couldn't find it. "Another reader said the idea of making the bureaucracy smaller or even accountable is just wishful thinking on your part and can't be done."

"He's right on the first part, but not the second."

I stopped looking.

"What do mean 'first and second parts?'" Dave asked.

"Well, I think he's right about the part that the idea of the American people getting control of their bureaucracy is just wishful thinking. It's the reason why I ended my talk on a down note. I don't think the American people will actually do anything to change it because they don't realize that the bureaucrats are now part of an unelected permanent government that neither the people nor the Congress exercise much control over. For this reason, the coming American dictatorship may not rest in the hands of one big dictator, but in the tens of thousands of hands of little ones."

"Tens of thousands of bureaucrats," Dave said.

"That's right."

"On the other hand, the part where the reader feels that it can't be stopped is absurd."

"Wait a minute," Dave said. "Do you have examples of things bureaucrats do that we the people, and the Congress in particular, have no control over?" Dave asked.

"Sure. Congress has authorized tax deductions that the IRS has systematically ignored or denied. The Food and Drug Administration has ignored our rights under the 9th and 10th Amendments and has assumed suzerainty over our very bodies. And, just recently, Congress has authorized flight crews to carry firearms on commercial airliners, but the Secretary of Transportation, a Clinton appointee,

has unilaterally nixed it. Both Congress and the people seem incapable of taking the steps necessary to stopping them. But, in reality, what recourse do the people or the Congress really have?" he asked.

"I don't know, but I think you're going to tell us," Dave said and looked at me.

Mac smiled. "Am I becoming that predictable?" he asked.

"You're very predictable," I said. "But in an unconventional sort of way," I added.

Mac found that funny.

"More wine?" Dave asked.

We all needed more and Dave rose from his chair and started filling each of our glasses.

Mac sat forward. "I'm not sure your remark is very flattering."

"But you *are* kind of predictable," Dave said. "Unfortunately, I've never seen it carry over to the poker table."

"Well, thank heavens for that small blessing," he said and sat back again.

"But, back to your question, if, at the very least, bureaucrats had to allow jury trials—before *randomly* chosen and *fully informed* jurors—and if they had to *prove* guilt, as opposed to having the accused prove innocence, 99 percent of their bureaucratic nonsense would evaporate. It would be too difficult and too expensive to enact and enforce anything but the most sensible regulations. The way it is now, when accused of anything by a bureaucrat, you are too often assumed to be guilty, unless you can *prove* you are innocent."

"Maybe we should just get rid of the bureaucracy," Dave said.

"No, though we have a problem with our bureaucracy, it can be useful, but only when it's under control. We like to think of ourselves as having a representative form of government where elected officials go to the legislatures or Congress, debate the law and exercise the will of the people, all within the framework of the state and federal constitutions with a full eye

on our rights. But once it's in the hands of bureaucrats, it's as if the *Constitution* no longer exists. And although we expect the laws that are passed to reflect the will of the people, more and more it isn't the peoples' representatives who are making policy, but unelected bureaucrats. Too often rules and regulations are made that thwart the will of the people, simply because the bureaucrats making the laws can't be voted out, nor can they be recalled.

There was another lull in the conversation as Dave and Mac began talking about fishing and the prospects of hunting in the fall.

What do Libertarians want?

Finally I interrupted. "Hey, I said, 'another theme running through some of the letters is that no one knows what Libertarians want. There are people who feel that if Libertarians had their way, nothing would be illegal. There'd wouldn't even be traffic lights or stop signs.'"

They stopped talking, but Mac didn't say anything. He was looking to me for clarification.

"One even said we've got to draw the line somewhere; otherwise, we'd have people urinating in the street. We'd have people killing each other left and right."

There was a long silence. Finally he asked, "What are you talking about?"

"Another objection to what you said in the series."

"No, I mean, what's this about traffic lights and peeing?"

"It's just that we can't have total freedom or we'd have anarchy and chaos."

He looked around as if making sure I was talking to him. "Where are you going with this?" he asked. He appeared to be genuinely puzzled.

"We've got to have rules," I said.

Finally he said, "You know, I've heard other people make statements like you just made. Things like there

being chaos, anarchy, no stop lights when you drive, and who knows what else if Libertarians are elected to office. I've asked other Libertarians if they know anything about this or if this is somewhere in Libertarian doctrine or in the party platform and they're at as much of a loss as I am."

"Then what do you Libertarians want?" I asked.

"If you want a rough idea of what we want, take a look at the *Constitution* including the *Bill of Rights*. Basically, the Libertarians want what's there. And if that's not clear enough, try to think about what Thomas Jefferson, James Madison, or George Mason would want. Do you think when they spoke of freedom they were talking about urinating in the streets or killing each other? Do you think they had urinating in the streets or anarchy when they wrote the *Declaration of Independence* or the first *Ten Amendments* to the *Constitution*?"

He looked at me for a long moment and I realized this wasn't a rhetorical question. He wanted an answer.

"No," I said.

"Well, Libertarians want roughly what those men wanted."

"What do you mean 'roughly'?" Dave asked.

"There are some differences and disagreements among Libertarians just as there were differences among the Founding Fathers."

"What are some of the things Libertarians differ on?" Dave asked.

"There are different positions on abortion, the military, and even the death penalty.

"But there are very few differences concerning freedom of speech, freedom of religion, jury trials, the right to bear arms, property rights, and the like.

"On the other hand, the people who worry about free stop signs and peeing in the street must only be Democrats and Republicans because they're the ones who bring it up when

they're talking about Libertarians."

Dave laughed.

"But I'll tell you what," Mac said, "and I think I'm speaking for almost all Libertarians when I say this, we'll make a deal with you: You give us back the *Constitution*, including the political freedoms in the *Bill of Rights*, and abide by the rules spelled out in *Article I, Section 8*, which sets limits on the power of the federal government, and *Article V*, which

explains how the *Constitution* is to be amended—and it's not by reinterpretation—and we'll give you *all* the stop signs you want. We'll put them every 50 feet, if that's what you really want. And if the Democrats and Republicans want to pee in the streets, go ahead. I can assure you the Libertarians don't really want to join you—at least the ones I know won't. But if you guarantee us the right to do what we want with our own bodies, to express ourselves the way we want to, to have fair trials before juries that aren't handpicked by either the state or defense attorney—but especially by the state—we'll allow you to pee anywhere you want. And, if this is what it takes, we'll even pee with you."

I thought Dave was going to fall out of his chair.

"What about abortion," I asked.



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"That's a genuine debate among Libertarians. There are those who feel abortion is okay because they focus on the rights of the woman. But there are also those who feel that a human's civil rights begin with conception."

"But at conception it's not human yet. It's just tissue."

He shrugged. "You're playing a semantics game here," he said.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"If a woman randomly gave birth to fish, dogs, and ponies, as well as human babies, I'd say you have a point calling it just tissue. But they don't. So it's hard to take the 'just tissue' arguments seriously.

"The question among Libertarians is: When do you want to confer civil rights? Do you choose to do that when the fetus is viable, do you wait until the child reaches the first grade? If you wait until the first grade you practice something akin to infanti-

cide, and there are societies that condone infanticide. But pick a point when someone has rights. Just don't use the 'just tissue' argument because I don't understand it and I don't buy into it."

"This sounds like the same argument that exists between the pro-choice advocates and the pro-lifers," Dave said, "except that they're arguing about when life really begins, or when there's a soul, or whatever."

"Yes. But Libertarians generally confine it to a political argument," Mac replied.

"So Libertarians don't just march in lockstep," I said. "They actually do disagree among themselves."

"The ones I know do," Mac said.

Following orders

We sat there while Dave and Mac stared at me. They knew I wasn't going to let them go on with more pleasant thoughts of hunting and fishing until I asked all of my questions.

I thought about other objections I'd heard.

"Yeah," I said, "another opinion I've heard raised by several people is that there is far too much worry about 'our rights.' These people feel that if you just do what you're supposed to do, you know, obey all the laws and regulations, and if you've got nothing to hide, you don't have to worry about your rights."

"They're right," Mac responded.

"They are?"

"Sure. But it's not only true here, it's true in every country. 'Toe the line and you won't get in trouble.' Think about it: If the women in Afghanistan, living under the Taliban, just wore their burkas as they were told to, refrained from driving, and stopped trying to get an education they would have been all right.

"If students in South Korea and China hadn't insisted on demonstrating for what they called human rights, they wouldn't have been beaten by the police. If people hadn't pressed

for freedom and reforms in Chile in the '80s, they wouldn't have 'disappeared,' and if slaves had just toed the line in the 1800s they wouldn't have been beaten or hung and there wouldn't have been a War Between the States.

"In fact, if blacks in the American South hadn't insisted on equality in the 60s, and if they hadn't staged their sit-ins, civil rights marches, and access-to-the-ballot-box demonstrations they wouldn't have been arrested, thrown in jail, or killed."

He waited for a response, but I didn't say anything.

"You see, all you're really saying is, 'Do as you're told and you'll be all right.' And, John, it's true. If we just let the government use all of the tools available to it, even if its actions contravene the *Constitution* and the *Bill of Rights*, you'll be okay as long as you don't complain and go along with the program. And if you don't stand up for the people who do protest, and just let the authorities deal with them as they see fit, you'll still be okay. In World War II the Nazis may have put Jews in ovens, but if you were Lutheran or Catholic and *didn't* complain about it, nothing happened to you because you were doing as you were told and obeying the law."

"But that stuff is different. What I mean is that if you aren't doing anything *wrong*, you have nothing to fear," I said.

"And what do you mean by 'wrong?' Does the state determine what's wrong? If so, then if freedom of religion is deemed illegal, or free speech goes away, or if we dispense with trial by jury, then as long as you don't complain and you do what the government tells you, and you don't stand up for people who are persecuted for demanding these freedoms, then you're okay.

"That's a prescription for total tyranny, especially as the bureaucrats, politicians, and special interests get

bolder. They already deny us the right to carry arms without permits, they seize our property with civil forfeiture laws—without even charging us with crimes, they even deny us the right to do with our own bodies as we please with their medical laws and laws about consensual sex. They are making more and more things 'wrong' all the time. And worse yet is that a lot of the things they find wrong are what we call consensual crimes, like smoking pot or playing poker—although the states ignore their own lotteries. I can't even enter into certain contracts with another consenting adult for medical aid, legal advice, or to have a rumpus room put on my house unless the state blesses it."

"You're saying there's no virtue in just following orders," Dave said.

"No, there isn't."

"What do we do?" Dave asked.

The solution

"You know, all the time I spoke before, you kept asking for solutions," Mac said. "Here's the solution to everything:

"If Americans really want their rights and constitutional government back, the first thing they'll do is regain control of the jury system—*our* jury system—and most of the silly laws in this country will just evaporate away.

"Remember, it's not the government's jury system, it's ours. And it's not there for the benefit of the government nor of lawyers, but for us. We've let the entire jury system be subverted by lawyers, judges, bureaucrats, and politicians.

"But if Americans aren't willing to regain possession of the jury system by making themselves aware of jury nullification and demanding random juries, then how are we going to regain possession of more difficult aspects of our government? We're not."

"But there are others who think that you're wrong here," I said. "They feel that in the United States it's senseless to complain about the government because here the people *are* the government."

He laughed.

"I don't know who first came up with that saying," he said. "It's an Orwellian concept and it's not true either in fact or in theory. If it were true, the *Constitution* wouldn't be written the way it is. The *Constitution* is very clear that there are the people, the states, and the federal government. It is also pretty explicit in how it puts limits on the federal government—not that anyone pays much attention to that anymore.

"And, one other thing, this aspect of the *Constitution*—its purpose of being a restraint on government—should be taught in the schools. That would be another part of the solution, to start showing people what the *Constitution* actually says, right from the time we're kids."

Dave said, "Everything you're saying still comes back to the fact that things aren't going to get better unless the American people actually get off their collective butts and do something, and..."

Mac and I sat there for a moment waiting for him to finish..

"...and what?" I finally asked.

"...and, Mac, you don't expect us to do it, do you?"

"No, I don't."

"Why?"

"We're different, now. Different from the guys who founded this country. You know, if you ever get around to reading about the actual events that led up to the Revolutionary War, the things that led farmers to take to the heights of Bunker Hill to fight the British and which eventually led to the *Declaration of Independence* and the War itself, they will seem, by today's standards, to be almost nothing. It was just a few unfair taxes, curtailment of some of our natural rights,

and an unresponsive government. Americans today bear oppression hundreds of times worse with nary a protest. We've gotten used to it. And as we become accustomed to the abuses and incursions into our rights, what may be outrageous and unbearable today will become the norm tomorrow and new incursions will be made.

"And anyone who complains, or points out that our federal government is *illegal* by the terms of the *Constitution*, is stereotyped and branded as a right wing extremist, a carper, or a complainer."

"And it is for those very reasons that you think an American dictatorship is inevitable," Dave said.

"That's right. I've come to think that subservience of the people to kings, bureaucrats, etc. is the natural state of mankind and that the concept that the people have individual rights is just so much rhetoric, and no one has ever said anything to make me think differently."

"So, you stand by everything you said that I put in the series I wrote," I said.

He thought several seconds, and then he nodded. "I do."

"Then that answers the last objection I remember," I said, "and that was why the series ended on a down note."

"Freedom is always within our grasp," he said. "The question is, will we reach for it? And I don't think, as a people, we will."

There was another silence.

"So, what do you want to hunt?" I asked.

"Upland birds, water fowl, maybe some deer."

"Let's start making plans," Dave said. Δ

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Two livestock feeders and an insulated water bucket

By Clay Sawyer

Have you priced feeders lately at the local feed store in your area? I did years ago and after my initial shock I vowed never to pay those prices for something I could make myself.

My first attempt produced a sad contraption made of saved coffee cans, coat hangers, bucket lids, and duct tape. Oh, it worked okay, but I just wasn't there and I knew it. So after a period of eyeing a collection of buckets, my overpressed brain cells concocted a workable idea. A couple of bucks is the only cost for the purchase of one simple cat litter box tray for every feeder you build.

I can easily assume most everyone has on hand 2x4 pieces, at least 8 sheet rock or deck screws, and of course the versatile 5-gallon bucket and lid for this first style of feeder.

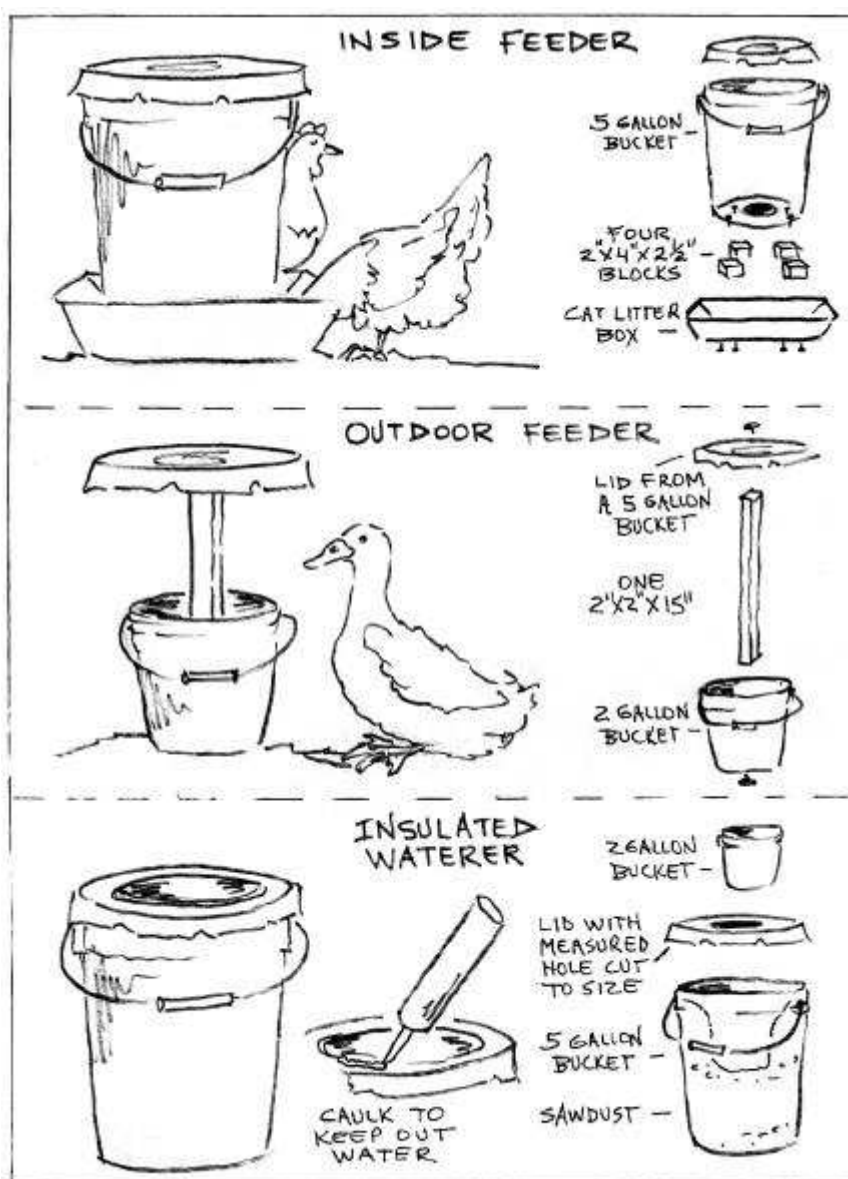
My laying hens range outside their fenced area daily but this feeder is accessible inside the coop at all times.

Begin by turning your bucket upside down and carving a 5" diameter hole in the bottom center carefully with a sharp knife. (Please keep in mind this feeder is for layer pellet and the hole is exactly the right size for feed to pay out smoothly as your chickens feed.) Afterwards place the four 2x4x2½" blocks of wood (see diagram) as if they were legs to support the bucket with the 2½" measurement as the height. Now flip the bucket and rest it on the four blocks and from inside the bucket screw each block on, one at a time, just outside the center of the 5" hole. Flip the bucket upside down again and put the cat litter tray in place and screw the tray, from it's bottom, onto each of

the four blocks. Reright, fill with layer pellet, then ring the chicken dinner bell.

This second style of feeder I use for outdoors and works well for older ducks and turkeys. Materials needed are a 2-gallon bucket, a 2x2x15" piece of wood, and the lid from a 5-gallon bucket.

Simply take the 2-gallon bucket, flip it upside down and screw one end of the wood piece to the inside from the outside of the bucket. Flip and screw on a lid from a 5-gallon bucket. Even a scrap piece of plywood covered with plastic will do for a lid. A log from the wood box could easily substitute for the 2x2x15". Δ



CLAY 99

the gee-whiz! page

By O.E. MacDougal

WWII inter-continental bombs

Though almost forgotten today, the very first unmanned "intercontinental bombs" were made by the Japanese during World War II, and they were used against the United States. As a result, in a 17-month period, hundreds of bombs fell on the United States.

Unlike today's ICBMs which deliver their cargo of destruction in 30 minutes or less, the delivery system devised by the Japanese were hydrogen-filled balloon bombs, called fugos, that rode the jet stream and took two to three days to cross the Pacific Ocean. The balloons, which were made of paper, were constructed by Japanese school children who did not know the purpose of their handiwork. When inflated, a balloon was about 33 feet in diameter and had a rack outfitted with explosives or incendiaries suspended from it. A timing fuse released the deadly cargo in two or three days when the balloons had presumably crossed the ocean.

The Japanese hoped to start forest fires, cause panic, and perhaps, with some luck, even hit an important military target. Most of the balloons were launched during the winter months, when the jet stream is at its strongest, but that is also when the forests in the United States are wettest and least likely to burn. So despite the fact that between November 1944 and April 1945 about 9,300 were launched, and at least 300 landed here, most did very little damage. They generally fell in uninhabited areas, and the only people killed were a minister's wife and five Sunday School children who stumbled across one while on an outing near Bly, Oregon. Ironically, one also fell across power lines in Washington state and cut off power to Hanford

where production of plutonium—plutonium that would be used in the atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki—was interrupted.

The bombs fell as far north as Canada and south as far as Mexico, and from California to points east of the Mississippi River. The Japanese were sure that, because the United States was an open society, the bombs would be newsworthy stories. By eavesdropping on radio transmissions, they could learn how effective they were. But this wasn't to be the case because every time an American citizen reported finding one, the FBI or some other agency showed up and threatened the citizen with treason and arrest if they talked about it.

As a result, after less than six months the Japanese concluded the bombs were falling into the Pacific without ever reaching the United States, so they ceased sending them. (Most did fall into the sea).

Of greater concern to the United States than bombs was the prospect that the Japanese might use the balloons as carriers of biological weapons in an attempt to spread germs. But they never did.

In the meantime, there was no way for the United States to retaliate in kind because the jet stream travels only from east to west. So we couldn't make our own to send in the opposite direction.

Many of the Americans who had reported the balloons during the war didn't dare talk about them even after the war because no one told them it was finally okay to. As a result, most Americans still remain unaware of the balloon bombings.

No one knows how many actually fell here, and the last time one was found was in 1987. So it's likely that there are more lurking out there in the backwoods waiting for unwary hunters, campers, and hikers.

Egg-laying mammals

We think of birds, reptiles, and fish as egg layers and mammals as animals that bear their young live. However, there are many species of reptiles and fish that also bear their young live (the eggs actually hatch within the mother), but there are only three species of mammals left in the world that lay eggs.

The one most people know about is the platypus, that Australian mammal with webbed feet and a bill like a duck, a tail like a beaver, and which finds its way around by developing an electric field around it like an electric eel. The male platypus is also one of the only three mammals that is venomous. It has a poisonous spur on each of its hind legs.

The other egg laying mammals are two species of echidna (pronounced a-kid'-na), whose diet includes ants and termites. Echidnas have spines that are somewhat like a porcupine's, hence its common name, the spiny anteater. Echidnas are also odd in that their rear feet face backward, their mouths only have a ¼-inch opening, their jaws don't move up and down, and like humans, they are among the few mammals that don't have tails. In captivity echidnas can live as long as 50 years, which is exceptional when you consider that they only weigh about 20 pounds and almost all long-lived mammals are very large.

Finally, unlike bird's eggs, which have hard shells made of calcium, the eggs of the three egg-laying mammals are pliable and leathery. But once the young hatch, as with all mammals, their mothers must nurse them.

THE IRREVERENT JOKE PAGE

(Believing it is important for people to be able to laugh at themselves, this is a continuing feature in **Backwoods Home Magazine**. We invite readers to submit any jokes you'd like to share to BHM, P.O. Box 712, Gold Beach, OR 97444. There is no payment for jokes used.)

A blonde walks into a bank in New York City and asks for the loan officer. She says she's going to Europe on business for two weeks and needs to borrow \$5,000. The bank officer says the bank will need some kind of security for the loan, so the blonde hands over the keys to a new Rolls Royce. The car is parked on the street in front of the bank, she has the Title, and everything checks out.

The bank agrees to accept the car as collateral for the loan. The bank's president and its officers all enjoy a good laugh at the blonde for being so dumb as to use a \$250,000 Rolls as collateral against a \$5,000 loan. An employee of the bank then proceeds to drive the Rolls into the bank's underground garage and parks it there.

Two weeks later, the blonde returns, repays the \$5,000 and the interest, which comes to \$15.41. The loan officer says, "Miss, we are very happy to have had your business, and this transaction has worked out very nicely, but we are a little puzzled. While you were away, we checked you out and found that you are a multimillionaire. What puzzles us is why would you bother to borrow \$5,000?"

The blond replies, "Where else in New York City can I park my car for two weeks for only \$15.41 and expect it to be there when I return?"

The class assignment in composition was to write about something unusual that happened during the past week.

Little Ben got up to read his. "Papa fell in the well last week—" he began.

"Good heavens," shrieked Mrs. Krup, the teacher. "Is he all right now?"

"He must be," said little Ben. "He stopped yelling for help yesterday."

Little Johnny's new baby brother was screaming up a storm.

He asked his mom, "Where did we get him?"

His mother replied, "He came from heaven, Johnny."

Johnny says, "WOW! I can see why they threw him out!"

If it's true that we are here to help others, then, what exactly are the others here for?

The Family Car

A young boy had just gotten his driving permit. He asked his father, who was a minister, if they could discuss his use of the family car. His father took him into his study and said, "I'll make a deal with you. You bring your grades up, study the Bible a little, get your hair cut and then we'll talk about it."

After about a month, the boy came back and again asked his father if they could discuss his use of the car. They again went into the father's study where the father said, "Son, I've been very proud of you. You have brought your grades up, you've studied the Bible diligently, but you didn't get your hair cut."

The young man waited a moment and then replied, "You know Dad, I've been thinking about that. You know Samson had long hair, Moses had long hair, Noah had long hair, and Jesus had long hair."

His Father said, "Yes, and everywhere they went, they walked."

A little boy got lost at the YWCA and found himself in the women's locker room. When he was spotted, the room burst into shrieks, with ladies grabbing towels and running for cover. The little boy watched in amazement and then asked, "What's the matter? Haven't you ever seen a little boy before?"

Jennifer's big formal wedding was fast approaching and she was delighted to hear that her Mom, Sheila, emerging from a nasty divorce, had finally found the perfect mother-of-the-bride dress.

Two days later, she was shocked to learn that her new young stepmother, Fawn, had purchased the same dress.

She asked her stepmother to buy another dress since her Mom had already altered her purchase. Fawn refused.

After two more weeks of frustrating shopping, Sheila found a dress that was not as nice as the first, but would serve.

When asked by a friend what she would do with her original dress, she grinned and replied, "I'm wearing it to the rehearsal dinner!"

An 80-year-old man went to the doctor for a check-up and the doctor was amazed at what good shape the guy was in.

The doctor asked, "To what do you attribute your good health?"

The old timer said, "I'm a turkey hunter and that's why I'm in such good shape. I'm up well before daylight and out chasing turkeys up and down the mountains."

The doctor said, "Well, I'm sure that helps, but there's got to be more to it. How old was your dad when he died?"

The old timer said, "Who said my dad's dead?"

The doctor said, "You mean you're 80 years old and your dad's still alive? How old is he?"

The old timer said, "He's 100 years old and, in fact, he hunted turkey with me this morning, and that's why he's still alive... he's a turkey hunter."

The doctor said, "Well, that's great, but I'm sure there's more to it. How about your dad's dad? How old was he when he died?"

The old timer said, "Who said my grandpa's dead?"

The doctor said, "You mean you're 80 years old and your grandfather's still living! How old is he?"

The old timer said, "He's 118 years old."

The doctor was getting frustrated at this point and said, "I guess he went turkey hunting with you this morning too?"

The old timer said, "No... Grandpa couldn't go this morning because he got married."

The Doctor said in amazement, "Got married! Why would a 118-year-old guy want to get married?"

The old timer said, "Who said he wanted to?"

Travelling across country by car, I decided to stop at one of those rest areas on the side of the road. I go into the restroom. The first stall is taken, so I go into the second stall. I had just sat down when I hear a voice from the other stall ask, "Hi, how's it going?"

I am not the type to strike up conversations with strangers in restrooms sitting on a toilet. I didn't know what to say, so finally I said, "Not bad."

Then the voice asks, "So, what are you doing?"

I am starting to find this a bit weird, but I reply, "Well, I'm going back east..."

Then I hear the guy, all flustered, say, "Look, I'll call you back. Every time I ask you a question this idiot in the next stall starts talking to me"

These days, parents pray the youngest child will get married and move out before the oldest one gets divorced and moves back in.

The wise old Mother Superior was dying. The nuns gathered around her bed. She asked for a little warm milk to sip so a nun went to the kitchen to warm some milk.

Remembering a bottle of whiskey received as a gift the previous Christmas, she opened it and poured a generous amount into the warm milk.

Mother drank a little, then a little more, then before they knew it, she had drunk the whole glass down to the last drop. "Mother, Mother" the nuns cried, "Give us some wisdom before you die!"

She raised herself up in bed with a pious look on her face, and pointing out the window she said, "Don't sell that cow!"

Health nuts are going to feel stupid someday, lying in hospitals dying of nothing.

A tale of two old girls

Sadie and Mildred, two Arkansas widows, are talking over a cup of tea.

Sadie: "That nice old widower, Jimmy Tobin, asked me out for a date. I know you went out with him last week, and I wanted to talk with you about him before I give him my answer.

Mildred: "Well, girl...I'll tell you. He shows up at the senior citizen's center just like a clock. He told me to get dressed up and I bought a brand new dress. And is he ever dressed. Fine suit, wonderful lining. And he brings me a big batch of flowers. Floyd never brought me flowers. Then he takes me downstairs and what's there but such a beautiful car. I think it was a Ford. Air conditioning and everything.

"Then he takes me out for supper. Beautiful meal. Roast pork even, and lovely mashed potatoes with no lumps like usual in them fancy restaurants.

"And then he took me for a beautiful drive. You know how I likes drives.

"I enjoyed it so much I could just die from pleasure. So then we're coming back to the senior center, I invite him in for a cup of tea and into an *animal* he turns. Completely crazy, he tears off my expensive new dress and has his way with me—two times."

Sadie: "Oh, my God, I'm glad you told me this. So are you telling me I shouldn't go out with him?"

Mildred: "No, woman, I'm just saying that if you go, wear an old dress.

Make a quilt out of **Levis**

By Dorothy Ainsworth

Back in the 80s I worked as a waitress in a busy little café where our mandatory uniform was a pair of Levis and a T-shirt. The only variation of the rule was that the dinner-shift waitresses had to wear the more “formal” Levi skirt and a T-shirt. That was as regimented as it got.

In the age of Dennys’ pink-and-orange polyester stripes, starched blouses with name tags, and pantyhosed legs stuffed into clodhoppers, who would protest the Levi dress code? Certainly not us—nor our male customers. It was heaven! We loved our benevolent boss who understood freedom.

I happily slaved away at that job for 12 years, smiling and comfortable in my blue jeans, cotton T-shirt, and tennies.

The place sold in 1992 and of course the new owners changed the uniform to a straight jacket with arm and leg holes, bound by an apron, so I quit and went elsewhere. Instead of taking all those beautifully faded duds to Goodwill, I decided to cut them up into little pieces and turn them into a quilt. Not only do I love to sew and indulge in compulsive fabric collecting, but I have a nostalgic passion for homemade quilts.

I vowed to put into practice an old World War II slogan about conservation my parents used to bark at us: “Make do, do without, use it up, wear

it out!” What could be more all-American than a Levi quilt, symbolizing capitalism (Levi Strauss & Co.), the work ethic (blue-collar clothes), and the recycling trend? My quilt would be a historical document written in cloth, manifesting my belief in the free-enterprise system of earning one’s way through life.

Every pair of my Levis had walked the walk and talked the talk. Each piece in the quilt would represent 1,000 miles and 1,000 words “May I take your order puleeze?”

There were other considerations. Levi material is tough and durable and doesn’t show the dirt. A Levi quilt is practical and versatile. Drag it to the beach and the sand brushes right off. Have a picnic on it and the



“Blue Monday” washday. Before you start cutting up those old jeans to turn into a quilt, wash them to soften them up.



The diamond-patterned Levi quilt is attractive in any setting.

mustard washes right off. Throw it on the floor for the kids to romp on and it's heavy enough to stay put. Carry it in the car for any occasion: an impromptu stop in the park, putting on chains in the snow, or keeping warm at a drive-in theatre if they ever come back in vogue. One thing is for certain—your Levi quilt will always be in style.

Levi quilts make great gifts. They are handsome, unique, and useful. College kids love 'em—think Levi and plaid for a guy or Levi and flowers for a girl. They're also perfect for baby showers, and are quick and easy to make. Use the softest blue-jean fabric you can find and alternate small 6" squares with pink or blue calico. Back the quilt with cotton or flannel and tie out with tiny tufts. Levi material is ideal for babies to crawl on because it doesn't "bunch up."

There will never be a shortage of old Levis, and the variety is endless. In any given family you can find a motley assortment: Grandpa's "Can't Bust Ems'," Dad's Wranglers, Mom's

designer jeans, the boy's "Baggies," and the girl's hip huggers—all discarded for some reason or another.

Start collecting; it won't be long before you stockpile enough jeans to make a quilt. If you come up short on the home front, ask your neighbors for their castaways, or pick up the free rejects from a used Levi outlet store. While you are sorting through the stacks, conjure up some creative ideas about what you want your quilt to look like. Let your imagination go wild, but make sure your design is compatible with your ability to sew it.

I personally envisioned a diamond pattern of faded blues and dark blues and maybe just enough army-green corduroy and white or pin-striped denim to make it interesting. I wanted to create a symphony of muted blues and subtle hues, accented by Levi's signature gold stitching to emulate



A couple of baby quilts I made—one for a boy, one for a girl.

the brass section in the orchestra. A few labels placed here and there and a tufted yarn tie in the center of each diamond would complete my "Rhapsody in Blue." I couldn't wait to get started.

The first step was to make a cardboard diamond-shaped template. Each diamond would be 12" by 9" with an added $\frac{1}{2}$ " seam allowance on all four sides. I drew a vertical 13" line on a piece of cardboard and halfway down I crossed it with a 10" horizontal line. I made sure the lines intersected exactly at their midpoints and at 90°. Then, with a ruler, I connected the tips of the cross to form a diamond, and cut it out with an exacto knife. (A template cut out of a flat plastic lid would work nicely, too.)

Next I put the huge pile of Levis on my dining room table and like a bad surgeon in a hurry slashed open the in-seams of all the legs and pressed them into flat pieces to trace the pattern on. I was careful to place the template on the straight grain of the denim, either vertically or horizontally, and drew around it with a black fine point "Sharpie" (permanent-ink marker). From past sewing experience I knew not to cut pieces on the



Grandson Zane's Levi quilt for his crib.

"bias" (45° to the grain) or they might "pull funny" or pucker later—especially when washed.

I purposely included gold-stitched seams as a design element crisscrossing many of the diamonds, and threw in a few pockets for visual appeal.

While cutting out the diamonds with pinking shears (very important

so the edges don't fray), I kept visualizing the finished quilt for inspiration. In this daydream stage, I decided I would use my little name-brand-tag collection to decorate the plain blue diamonds. (For years I had cut the neck-scratching tags off of my clothes, and saved all the creative artsy ones.) It would be a touch of whimsy and also date the quilt for future generations (clothing companies come and go and it's fun to look back).

I had planned a larger-than-king-sized quilt, with my (then) "Oregon-grown" Bunyanesque boyfriend in mind, so I had to cut, cut, and cut diamonds until I was (Levi) blue in the face. It turned out that cutting was the easy part.

Squares are more straight-forward to work with than diamonds, but to my eye they're not as pleasing in large quilts (kinda "blocky"), but are quite attractive in small quilts (using small squares). When you sew diamonds together you end up with diagonal strips. This takes a little head-scratching geometry to lay out so that you end up with a large rectangle.



Over-sized Levi quilt is the "centerpiece" in this small 9' x 16' cabin I call the "honeymoon suite," where I lived while I built my house.

The best place to mark out your quilt dimensions is on the floor (with masking tape). Then, make your longest strip of diamonds first, which will span from the upper left corner of the quilt to the lower right corner. Now you can determine in advance how much shorter to make each row on either side of that middle strip. At both ends of each strip will be a ½ diamond. This “squares off” the quilt all around the perimeter.

After you finish sewing all your strips to fill the rectangle you have laid out on the floor, you then sew the strips together. This can get a little tricky so pin the seams as you go. It’s easy to get lost “swimming in diamonds.”

By the time you have sewn several strips together things start to get a little heavy, especially your breathing. You might need some help wrestling the quilt around while you smoothly control the flow of fabric moving along in a nice straight ½" seamline under the sewing machine needle.

Assuming all goes well, it’s now time to turn the quilt wrong-side up on the floor and press the seams flat with a steam iron. You don’t want lumps and bumps between the layers when you put the batting and backing on.

Because my quilt was so big and heavy, I used two thin flannel sheets sewn together and trimmed to size for the batting. For a more standard sized quilt you won’t have to worry about the weight, so you can buy conventional batting which comes in a variety of thicknesses, depending on how “fluffy” you want your quilt to be.

I found some lightweight dark blue denim to use for backing, on sale at a fabric outlet store and bought the whole bolt for \$2 per yard. You can choose anything you like for the reverse side of your quilt, but I suggest it be a fabric that wears well and is dirt resistant.

It’s important to pre-wash the yardage to pre-shrink and soften it.

100% cotton shrinks quite a bit! I cut my 12 yards of backing into three lengths (each about a foot longer than the longest dimension of the quilt) so the washing machine could handle the load. Again, I used the pinking shears so I wouldn’t end up with balls of tangled threads to trim off. The dryer finished the shrinking job, then I ironed the fabric flat.

I sewed the three pieces together lengthwise along the selvages (factory-bound edges), pressed the seams open, and laid the backing right-side down on the floor. I placed the diamond quilt-top over it and then trimmed the backing (with pinking shears) 4" bigger than the quilt-top all the way around. I removed the quilt-top just long enough to sandwich the batting in and heaved the quilt-top back on. That left me with 4" of backing to overlap the face of the quilt all the way around. I pinned it in place for now but would sew it after I got the quilt tied off, so the layers would stay intact.

I chose yarn that would not be too heavy-gauged to pull through Levi material. I bought a yarning needle (big-eyed) and thimble and went to work on my hands and knees, tying a tuft with a square-knot in the center of each diamond to hold the three layers of the quilt securely together. While I was down there I sprinkled my little labels all around the quilt in a pleasing arrangement and sewed them on by hand.

I then hefted up the giant quilt and beginning at one corner sewed the overlap down, force-feeding the entire perimeter of the blanket inch by inch under the sewing machine needle. It was slow-going, but doable, even on my 1940s Singer.

Finally the 9 ft. by 10 ft. quilt was done. It took 153 diamonds to create this last vestige of the old “Copper Skillet” days. My brilliant career as a waitress inadvertently spanned 40 years. (Nobody plans on being a waitress forever!) I waited on a mil-

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lion people, walked 120,000 miles in circles, and talked myself silly.

Now as I lie around on my king-sized quilt with my two dogs and the cat, I call my long-awaited-for and much-deserved leisure time Hemmed-in Happiness. Δ

Harvesting the wild upland game birds

By Jackie Clay

We look upon upland game birds, such as grouse, ptarmigan, quail and turkey, as wild “chickens and turkeys.” That is, poultry that we do not have to buy, feed, house, clean up after, or protect from varmints. Game birds hustle for their living, requiring little, if anything, from us.

Wild birds are especially useful to homesteaders who are new to a piece of land and have not yet begun a small flock of poultry. Bountiful in most areas, they supply roasted chicken, chicken stew, and chicken and dumplings without a chicken on the place.

And game birds are not the only tasty wild bird, either. Those of you who have read the Laura Ingalls Wilder *Little House* series may remember when blackbirds invaded and destroyed the Ingalls’ oats and corn patch. There were so many that Pa could not chase them away and resorted to shooting them. True to the “waste not, want not” way of life, they cleaned and cooked up the birds. Pretty darned good eating, especially if you’ve not had chicken for awhile and are craving it.

So let’s take a look at our local wild poultry possibilities.

Wild turkey

Wild turkey is, perhaps, the “king” of upland (as opposed to waterfowl) wild birds. Weighing in at a hefty 10 pounds or better, this glowing metallic bronze bird deserves a high place on the homesteader’s favorite food list. Benjamin Franklin so revered the

wild turkey that he nominated it for the national bird.

Today, due to release programs, the wild turkey is plentiful in areas scattered all over the lower United States and even Hawaii.

And wild turkey tastes even better than “store” turkeys (any surprise there?). The catch is that wild turkeys are not easily hunted. They are pretty cagey birds. But with a little study and hunting, they can be brought to the table.

I’ve hunted wild turkey by simply scouting around early in the morning, when they are flying off their roosts. You can often hear them crashing

through the tree branches and making morning yelps, “pucks,” and gobbles. At this time, they are *not* quiet birds. The key is to go out early and simply sit very still in a concealed spot. It’s quite a pleasant way to spend an early morning.

Wild turkeys eat seeds, acorns, piñon nuts, fruits, vegetation and insects and can be found “grazing” in open meadows in or near wooded areas or scratching under oak trees or fruit trees, such as hawthorn, wild plum, chokecherry, and apple.

I am not wealthy enough to spend money on a gun for each bird or animal I hunt. Some folks have a



favorite “turkey” gun, “goose” gun, “grouse” gun, etc. I have an all-around 12-gauge shotgun. It works well for everything, varying the “punch” by simply loading it with lightweight #7 shot for smaller game birds and going all the way to rifled slugs for a close encounter with a problem bear.

I have had good luck using full choke with a #6 shot, but if you will be shooting at longer distances, you might go with #4 or #5 shot. With nearly all my hunting I am a quite close range shooter.

Avid turkey hunters wear camo and darken their faces with earth colors. I don’t go after the biggest old tom I can find. I’d much rather bring home one of the younger boys living on the fringe of the old man’s harem. They are a lot more tender, and not so smart. You can tell the old gobbler from a younger jake by his larger size and longer beard. (The beard is the black bristly decoration which hangs from the center of the tom turkey’s breast.)

Turkeys are quite easily fooled into revealing their position and availability by use of a turkey call. We’ve done away with carrying a call by learning to “talk turkey,” imitating the sharp “puck-puck” yelps and gobbles of a contented flock of turkeys. Our 11-year-old son, David, not only calls them but gets them to parade around, circling and dancing right in front of him. It’s an amazing sight.

The trick to turkey calling is not to over-do it and stay quietly concealed until a good shot presents itself. Those big birds can fly like bombers and run like a deer at the slightest frightening sight or sound.

Once you’ve shot your bird, take it immediately to a cooler, then on home to pluck and draw. Don’t leave it under a tree for a couple of hours in the heat of the day while you catch a few Zs, or you’ll have spoiled meat. Take good care of your hard-earned

turkey and you’ll be rewarded with extremely mouthwatering meals.

Grouse and ptarmigan

These large nearly chicken-sized birds are plentiful larder suppliers. Tasty and fairly easy to hunt, they are a woodsman’s delight. While not nearly as large as a wild turkey, they are, nevertheless, large enough for a good meal for one, if it is the only course, or for two or three people if you will be serving bread, vegetables, and dessert.

Where wild turkey is a once or twice-a-season meal, grouse and ptarmigan can provide once or twice-a-week table fare.

There are several kinds of grouse and ptarmigan scattered throughout the United States and Canada. Some grouse and ptarmigan, such as the sharptail and ruffed grouse and the willow ptarmigan of the far north, are quite plentiful and common over a large area. Others, like the prairie chicken and white tailed ptarmigan, are less common and scattered over a smaller range. By studying the upland game bird regulations in your area, you can quite easily learn what grouse and/or ptarmigan are available for you as a subsistence meat hunter.

But even in general areas where a species is known to live, they may not be plentiful and common. I never hunt such a bird except in a true survival situation. For instance, blue grouse are hunted in the mountains of this area of Montana, but they are not common. I’ve only seen a handful in several years of tramping all the wild places near our home, so when bird season arrives, I pass by these beautiful birds and harvest much more plentiful sharptail.

For the most part, the most common species of grouse and ptarmigan are birds of the woodland, living along more open places, such as swamps and meadows. Prairie chickens and sage grouse are found in arid open prairies, coulees, and sage flats.

To locate these birds, simply frequent their habitat often, especially in the spring when their courting calls and the “drumming” (made with rapid motions of the wings) calls attention to them. The ruffed grouse, a common grouse from Canada to the southeastern states, is easy to locate by his loud drumming, which sounds like an old motor being started: “Puttt....puttt.....puttt...putt, putt, putt....puttt!” Other grouse and



Wild turkey tastes better than store turkeys, and they are now plentiful in most areas.

ptarmigan coo and give low hoots as lady bird attractants.

Of course you won't be hunting these birds until fall, except in a survival situation, but once you learn what game birds are common in your area, you'll be better equipped to hunt come autumn.

Wild turkeys are easiest to hunt alone, using stealth and cunning, while grouse and ptarmigan are most successfully hunted with a good dog. These birds are very good at hiding, watching a hunter walk right by. And they can run like race horses, quickly gaining the dense cover of a willow thicket, out of gunshot. A well trained bird dog will alert you to the birds' presence and location well before that deafening thunder of wings startles you out of your wits—even if you've hunted birds for years.

A good dog will flush a hidden grouse and not let it run off. Then, after your shot, he will sniff out your bird for you and retrieve it, saving many minutes, or longer, of hunting through dense fall leaves and rubbish for your dinner.

Like my guns, my dog must be versatile. I've always had a Labrador retriever. I'll admit it, I'm biased. They are a large enough dog to be good protection against predators,

thieves, and varmints, mild tempered enough not to eat friends' children, have an excellent nose (can even find our son, David, when he's late for supper), and can hunt and retrieve all upland birds and waterfowl. Like guns, everyone must choose a dog that suits them. Even a Heinz 57 mongrel can be a great bird dog, with a little natural ability and lots of training. (Even my hard-headed Labs must be trained or they are just a bird-loving goof.)

Hunting grouse, especially, is like a western quick-draw. Even with a dog, they'll quite often fly up with a roar of wings, seemingly right under your nose. Practice being ready and safe. I don't grouse hunt with many people. It can be a good way to get killed. Partners who pull up their gun before considering where you are standing are deadly.

Most states have a liberal limit on daily birds in possession. But remember that "possession" has grown to mean not only birds in your cooler, truck, pack, or hand, but also in your freezer and canning jars. Luckily, possession doesn't count the birds in your stomach—yet.

I shoot enough legal birds to fill my need, then quit, taking care to keep each one cold after shooting and

plucking and drawing them as soon as possible. In fact, I'll often pluck and draw them right in the field, bagging them and laying them on ice in a cooler before I reach home. I'm a picky, picky meat hunter, but it pays off because I never have "gamey" or "wild" tasting (half spoiled) meat.

Partridge, quail, and pheasant

Where grouse and ptarmigan are more woodland birds, the gray partridge, quail, and ringneck pheasant favor more open land and agricultural fields.

The largest is the ringneck pheasant, being as large as many "store" fryers and much more tasty. He is an introduction from China and has multiplied across much of the United States, right up through mid-Canada. He can be found in and near grain fields, especially midwestern corn fields, as he eats grain as a preferred food. The cock pheasant crows a distinctive "stepping-on-rusty-barbed-wire" song. Honestly, it sounds just like a strand of rusty barbed wire being stepped on.

The ringneck is quite plentiful and common. It is the second largest upland game bird, with the wild turkey being the biggest. When I was a new homesteader, and characteristically broke, I would go out every second evening with my shotgun and Lab, bagging a nice rooster pheasant. All autumn, I ate well and learned to cook pheasant in hundreds of different ways, from pheasant breakfast sausage to pheasant tacos.

The gray partridge is quite a bit smaller than the pheasant, but still well worth hunting, being locally abundant in flocks.

The small quail hardly seems worth shooting, but they are abundant in flocks and are very good eating.

With all these birds, as with grouse and ptarmigan, they are most successfully hunted with a good bird dog.



The locally plentiful ringneck pheasant is tasty meat on the table.

Survival techniques

Okay, you say, this is fine, given “normal” times. But what about a true survival situation, when you have no gun, and desperately need food in order to live?

Slingshot hunting: A slingshot is in my survival gear. This is not the slingshot of my kiddie years (rubber band and forked stick), although that’s how I learned to be a pretty fair shot. I use a wrist-rocket with a stiff wire handle and rubber tubing instead of a rubber band. With round steel slingshot ammunition, it’s deadly on birds and small mammals. And when you’re out of “ammunition,” you can always find appropriate sized rounded stones.

The slingshot has other benefits, too. It is quite silent, and doesn’t alarm birds, allowing you to shoot more than once when a flock is available. This weapon is also quiet enough not to advertise your position, should the situation warrant stealth.

With the wrist-rocket, you can seldom pick a flying bird out of the air. Hunting birds on the ground or on a perch becomes necessary. Therefore, leave Rover at home and walk the woods as stealthily as a predator. Sometimes simply sitting very still in a concealed location is your best option.

And, just like your gun, the more practice you do at home, before you need it, the more successful you will be at bringing a bird to your camp with a slingshot.

I work at getting very close and aiming for the head; this is usually a killing shot.

Bird snares: Wild birds can be effectively caught in snares, which are quite easy to put together. But the trick here is to have enough experience to be able to read the area for bird sign, such as droppings, feeding areas, and trails.

It does no good to just set a snare out in a meadow. You may get lucky

and catch something. But truthfully, you probably will go hungry and become frustrated.

Look for faint trails, where birds come through the grass toward a feeding area or favorite watering place, such as a small, secluded spring in a dry area. Grouse and other birds often feed under chokecherries and hawthorns. Setting a couple of snares on trails leading to these favored places is frequently a good way of eating the next day.

While wire makes the best snare, you can fashion a snare out of any strong cordage, from stout fish line to shoe laces. One of the best is the spring pole snare. This is simply a sturdy, flexible sapling which can be bent down to a trail and has your snare loop fixed to the top. Near the loop, you tie a small notched stick as a trigger. This fits into another notched small sapling next to the trail, holding the spring pole bent. When a bird walks along the trail, his head goes through the loop. His shoulders do not fit and he “bumps” the loop, knocking the notched “trigger” stick out of place and BOING!, the bent sapling springs straight, catching the food you desperately need.

You can help support a cord or lightweight wire loop by hanging it lightly on grass or small twigs that will not interfere with its movement. Try to keep the setting very natural and not trampled and cluttered by white cut branches, stripped leaves, etc. Birds are not stupid.

The loop of your snare for grouse-sized birds should be about three inches, larger for turkeys, smaller for quail or similar-sized birds.

You can also make your snare better by adding a few bits of “bait” on both sides of it. Hawthorn berries, a little seed, or whatever the birds in your area are eating (you need to know) will increase your chances of eating. Don’t overdo it, or the birds will become suspicious.

Throwing stick: No, don’t laugh. The aborigine first used a throwing stick in order to kill small mammals and game birds. I can’t count the times I have been close enough to quite large birds to kill them with a good throwing stick. No ammunition needed, no cost, no noise, and you can find them literally growing on trees. Not all sticks are good throwing sticks. Choose one of a heavier wood—oak or green pine, if available. You’ll want one shorter than a baseball bat and about as big around, with one end larger than the other. The smaller end is the “handle,” the larger, the weapon.

Pick a throwing stick that fits your hand well and practice, practice, practice. Throw at rocks, clumps of grass. Throw at different distances until you know what you can and can’t hit. I prefer a sidehand throw, holding the throwing stick just back of my shoulder, then sailing it with force, directly in front of me. By this method of throwing, if you slightly miss the bird’s head/neck with the end of the club, you will often hit it a lethal crack with the “handle.”

Hand-held snare pole: Because you can often get very close to seemingly tame game birds, you can catch them with a slender 10-foot-long pole with a snare loop rigged on the end. I learned this from an old Ojibway hunter in northern Minnesota. And it really does work.

With any type of light wire or string, tie a guide loop at the small end of your pole. Then tie another one back about 18 inches. Fashion a four-inch diameter slip-noose out of stout fishing line or wire, then run the end through your guides to the larger end of your pole, where your hand will hold it, fishing pole style.

Position yourself in a likely gathering place for the birds’ feeding, watering, or roosting place and wait. When a bird is within range, *very* slowly reach the pole out and drop the noose over the bird’s head. It’s

amazing that they don't seem to notice the pole at all. Then, slowly tighten the loop with your right hand while holding firmly to the pole with your left. (Opposite, of course, for left-handed people.)

Don't yank; the bird usually will break his own neck when he finds himself caught unless you quickly lay the pole down on the ground, forcing him down as well. I used this method to catch some of my fancy (and expensive) escaped pheasants, and was able to return them in good health to the breeding pens.

Bow and arrow: I think most of us, as a child, made "Indian" bows and arrows out of saplings. What we did not realize is that these crude bows and arrows are quite capable of killing game birds and feeding our hunger.

By fashioning a stout bow from a sapling and a piece of cordage and even featherless arrows from a few straight, strong saplings, you can be quite an effective survival hunter. To further increase your accuracy, with the first bird you kill, split coarse wing feathers and lay them in three equally spaced grooves just down from your notch, gluing them into place with pine pitch and tying them at either end with a fine winding of thread. Then harden your sharpened

point by gently heating them in a bed of coals.

As many upland wild birds are quite easily approached (with some caution, of course), this primitive archery becomes very productive.

Remember, the more balanced your bow is, the better it will shoot, and the straighter your arrows and the better fletched (feathered) they are, the more accurate they will be placed. A little extra evening work on your weapon, and the better you will eat.

Alternative "edible" birds

While you get the most meat from game birds, there is no reason to ignore their smaller relatives, especially in a survival situation. (Remember Pa Ingalls shooting the blackbirds that Ma cooked up for the family?)

A similar story actually happened to me. Back when I was young and a new homesteader eating pheasant for meat, I had an elderly Russian couple for neighbors. They were old-country folk and very proud of their garden, which fed them all year. I had just come back empty-handed from hunting one afternoon when my neighbor man stopped me at the mail boxes.

"Dosea blackbirds. Dey eating our garden. Very bad!" He was very distressed. "You come shoot?" He point-

ed at my gun. "Please? You come shoot?"

I could hardly refuse. And I was shocked at the sheer number of blackbirds in and around their garden. Coming from the river, there must have been thousands. So I popped off a couple of shots into the midst of the worst flocks, dropping several dozen birds. With a shocked rattle of wings, the huge flocks took off back to the safety of the swampy river bottom.

My good neighbor woman, scarf on her grey head, bent down with a large basket and gathered up the dead birds. To take them away to bury, I thought.

"Tank you! Oh, Tank you, so much!" they smiled happily. "You come to dinner?"

Observing country etiquette, I agreed.

And later, at mealtime, I sat down to borscht, flaky rolls, and a very large roasting pan filled with little, delicately browned...blackbirds. And they were actually very good, too, once I got over my well concealed shock.

So, remember that when you are hungry, there are other birds besides game birds that can feed you in a survival situation. I know of not one "poisonous" bird. Some are better tasting than others. For instance, you can eat a turkey vulture or fish duck, but I sure wouldn't recommend it. The taste would be unpleasant.

Picking and drawing upland birds

Most upland game birds (and miscellaneous "survival" birds) can be easily dry-picked; the feathers are fairly small and not well attached. Simply sit down with a paper bag and pluck the feathers and throw them into the bag for disposal. Large birds, like the wild turkey and some older birds, resist dry-plucking. Do not tear the skin trying to remove the feathers. Instead, heat up a blue water bath canner full of water to boiling and



*A good dog is a great help in hunting most upland game birds.
The author's yellow Lab works hard.*

immerse the whole bird for about two minutes. Then remove and try plucking. If the feathers are still hard to pull, repeat the process. Do not over-soak in boiling water or the skin will pull apart.

The large wing feathers and tail feathers are more easily pulled, one or a couple at a time instead of handfuls. Any pinfeathers can be pulled with either heavy tweezers or needle-nosed pliers.

After the bird is naked, you'll want to singe it to remove the scattered hairs on the body. You can do this by either passing the bird lightly over an open flame, such as a gas stove burner or a campfire, or rolling up a piece of newspaper, lighting it and singeing where necessary.

It's a good idea to cut out the oil gland, located on the tail; I just cut off the tail, as nobody cares to eat it in our family.

Then with a small, sharp knife, open the bird from vent to breastbone. Take care to pull the skin up and hold the knife blade upward to avoid puncturing the bowels. With small birds you may have to cut the skin and meat at the sides, below the breast, to access the insides.

Cut the head and neck off quite close to the breast unless you're a wild turkey neck eater. Then with two fingers or the entire hand, depending on the species of bird, gently but firmly draw out the insides, scraping the lungs out with your finger. They are attached to the ribs.

Pick out any shot you can see if you killed with bird with a shotgun. Nobody likes to munch down on a pellet.

Separate out the gizzard, heart, and liver if you wish. Gently turn the gizzard inside-out and rinse it well.

Now rinse the entire bird very well with ice water and pat it dry, including the inside. Place in a bag in a cool place for 24 hours to help ensure a tender meal. I've eaten fresh game birds, because I needed to, without

this step and found that more than a few were a little tough. Even home raised chickens are tougher if you don't cool them for 24 to 48 hours after butchering them.

If you're in a survival situation and need to get cooking that bird *now*, I'll tell you a trick I learned back in Minnesota. No plucking, no gutting. You can be cooking that bird in five minutes...or less. This trick works on grouse sized birds.

1. Hold dead bird by the legs, stomach up.
2. Stand on his wings, a foot on each one, spread-eagle.
3. Firmly pull on the legs with both hands.

There will be a ripping sound and suddenly you'll be standing with legs and a skinless, shining pink breast in your hands. It takes only a few seconds to pluck the legs and cut them into "drumsticks," and you're cooking. Of course you do lose a few ounces of giblets and back, but when you're starving you want to *eat right now*. You can always retrieve the less-choice cuts while the main course is broiling over coals.

Recipes

Turkey with wild rice stuffing:

- 1 whole wild turkey, cleaned
- 2 cups cooked wild rice
- 1 medium onion, chopped medium
- 2 medium carrots, grated medium
- chopped giblets or ½ cup chopped canned chicken breast
- 1 tsp. dehydrated garlic
- 1 tsp. coarse ground pepper
- 1 tsp. salt
- butter for rubbing
- 1 cup water
- 2 Tbsp. sweet chili sauce
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- ½ cup sliced water chestnuts
- 1 cup wild plum jam

In a large mixing bowl, mix the wild rice, onion, pepper, carrots, chopped giblets, water chestnuts, and

dry spices to make a stuffing. Rub the inside of the turkey with butter, then stuff with the stuffing mix.

Truss the bird nicely and place in a covered roasting pan with a cup of water. Cover and steam until about done.

In a small mixing bowl, mix the sweet chili sauce with the wild plum jam. With a basting brush, coat the entire turkey. Return to oven, uncovered. Every 20 minutes, bring turkey out and brush with basting sauce. It will develop a beautiful glaze, slightly spicy and sweet. And if you should have any dressing left over, you can mix it with an egg and shape into patties to fry for breakfast in the morning. I often double the stuffing recipe and save it for just this treat. You'll serve a special wild turkey, for sure.

Grouse fajitas:

- 1 grouse (or other bird)
- 1 cup Italian dressing
- 1 Tbsp. cooking oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 bell pepper, sliced finely
- 1 seeded jalapeño pepper, chopped
- 6 flour tortillas (gorditas)
- 1 cup shredded head lettuce
- 1 tomato, diced
- 1 cup shredded cheddar cheese

Cut the grouse into large pieces and marinate in dressing overnight, covered or in plastic bag. Next day place marinated pieces into roasting pan (or pressure cooker if you suspect the bird is old and tough). Cook covered until done and tender. Cool. Remove the meat from bones and chop it into medium pieces. Heat a frying pan, add the cooking oil, and briefly fry the meat with the chopped onion and both kinds of peppers until the vegetables are done but firm.

Immediately heat the tortillas, one at a time, on a griddle, then wrap the meat/vegetable mix with some lettuce, tomato, and grated cheese. You can also dress with any of your

favorite spicy salad dressings. Enjoy! No one will ever accuse you of serving boring wild game meals.

Pheasant and dumplings:

1 pheasant (or equivalent other bird)
2 Tbsp. butter
2 Tbsp. flour
2 cups broth from cooking
½ pt. sliced canned carrots
1 small onion, sliced
½ pt. canned mushrooms
½ cup dehydrated peas, rehydrated
½ pt. canned celery
½ tsp. black pepper
½ tsp. salt

Dumplings:

2 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
2 Tbsp. shortening
milk

Cook, cool, and debone the pheasant. Chop the meat into large pieces. In a deep cast iron frying pan, melt the butter, stirring in flour to make roux. Slowly add the broth and stir until thickened to medium consistency. Add more broth if necessary. Mix in the vegetables and seasonings.

For the dumplings, combine the flour, salt, and baking powder in a medium mixing bowl. Cut in the shortening until it is the size of peas. Mix in enough milk to make a slightly sticky dough. Spoon it on top, in individual dumplings.

Cover and bake at 300° for 20 minutes. Do not cheat and peek or your dumplings will not be light and fluffy. This is an easy, satisfying meal that can be ready in 45 minutes. I've made it often in camp with a Dutch oven, using dehydrated vegetables. No complaints yet. Folks are too busy stuffing food into their mouths, I guess.

One reason many of my wild bird recipes include pre-cooked, chopped meat is that nothing turns diners off quicker than running across a stray pellet in their meal. By taking time to cut up cooked meat, you nearly always eliminate this embarrassing problem, and help keep people from cracking a tooth.

Of course you can cook up wild upland game birds in any way you would chicken or turkey. The meat is all fine flavored.

A simple family favorite is to bread breasts and fry them in a moderate amount of cooking oil. When about done, I add a couple of handfuls of fresh morel mushrooms, which have been sliced in half. These are fried up with the breasts until all are done and delectable. Better cook two full breasts and a cup of morels for each person. I've never had leftovers.

And I think you'll be glad you have added wild upland game birds to your harvest of the wild. So glad, in fact, that you'll do all you can to keep your neighborhood flocks increasing. This can be helped out by providing feed in secluded areas, especially during rough winters.

You can even buy wild game bird chicks to raise and release on your land to help increase the edible population. I've raised and released pheasants, partridge, and bobwhite, along with wild turkeys. And from the hunting in following years, I know my efforts paid off.

If you plan on giving restocking a try, be sure to contact your local Department of Fish and Wildlife. Ask about any special permits needed to do this. Most native wildlife is not legal to have in possession without a special permit. The permits are generally easy to get and inexpensive. Δ

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FENCING

for livestock and poultry

By Jackie Clay

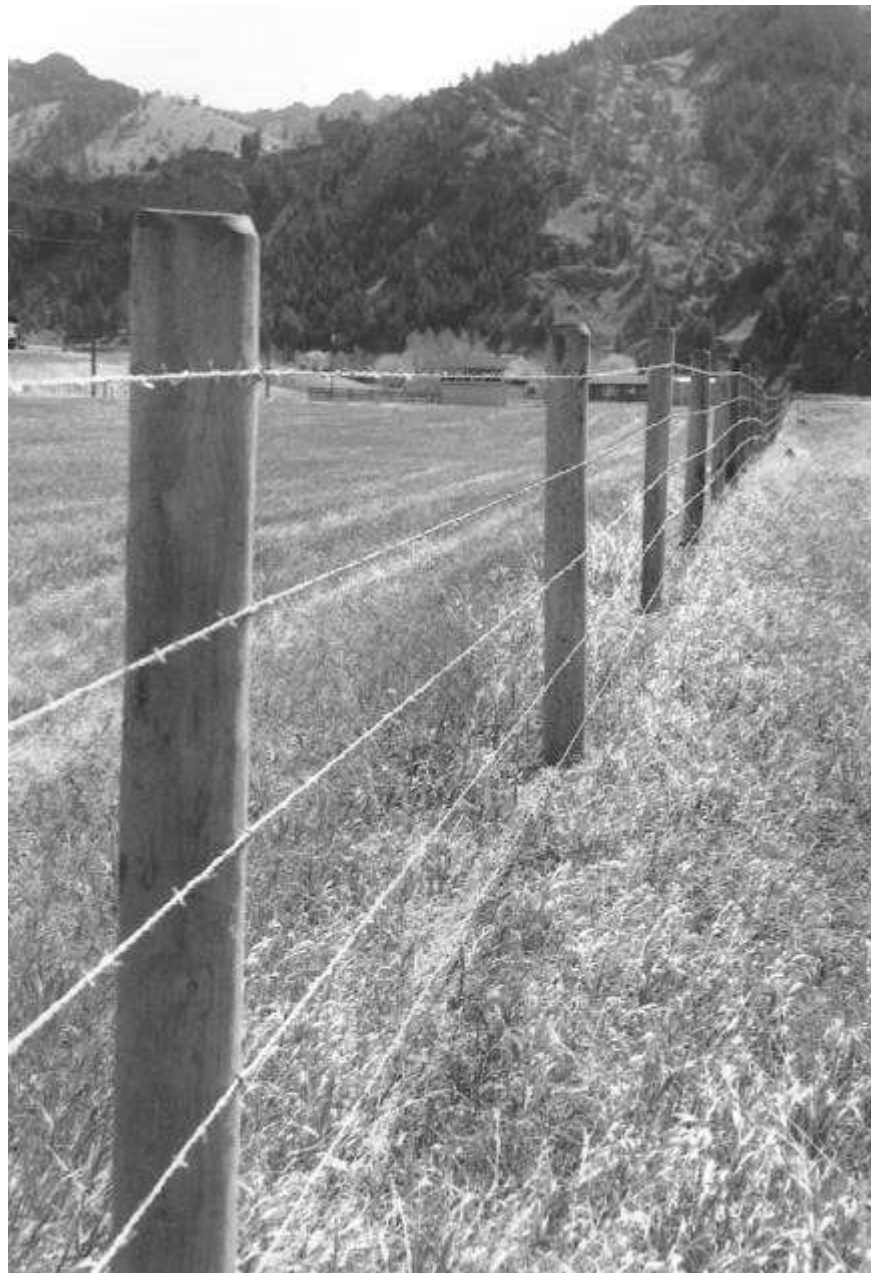
Oh, how I wish that one could put their animals on their honor when it comes to keeping them in a certain area, and out of others. Unfortunately, animals are not troubled by anything but creature comforts, so a good, tight fence is a must, not only to keep them in, but to keep predators out.

There's an old saying that a fence should be built "horse high, bull strong, and hog tight." And that's not just rustic foolishness. Most animals weaken fences to the point of escaping their pasture, not by crashing through, but leaning out. An animal exerts tremendous pressure leaning over or through a fence, looking for that greener grass on the other side. Even chickens weaken a fence by flying up to roost on top of it.

I know some folks are asking smugly, "Why not use an electric fence? *my* stock won't lean on that!" That is true. Usually. Unfortunately, an electric fence isn't a total answer, as I've found out.

I've seen several pasture fires with sad consequences after a deer or large stray dog hit the electric wire, which served as the only fence, causing the broken wire to short out in dry grass.

And then there are the times when something panics the animals, sending them dashing through the electric wires, which "disappear" in their frenzied eyes. And goats are so smart that they take a calculated risk, dashing under one quickly, so they might



Well stretched, closely spaced wire lasts a long time.

miss a shock entirely.

Okay, I will admit that some electric fences are useful. I've never seen stock go through a five-strand New Zealand high tensile electric fence, and I've never seen wildlife break one that was constantly charged. "Constantly" is the key word here.

I do like to use one strand on the inside of a good, solid fence, as well as a top wire in some instances, to keep the animals away from the fence. An electric wire is also very good to keep predators out of a pasture or pen. By running a low-to-the-ground wire, out from the fence, and another one up two feet, you will keep out all but the extremely determined varmit.

But any time an electric fence is considered, keep in mind that a single, light gauge wire on little round posts is not a safe fence to contain animals. Sooner or later they will go under, over, or through it. The power will go out, the battery will go dead, or the fence will short out from a tree branch going down on it, not to mention wildlife, stray animals, or a panic-stricken animal dashing through the wire.

Most folks of moderate income rely on three kinds of stock fencing: barbed wire, wood, and woven wire. There many foes of barbed wire, because of the damage it can do, but I have visited a lot of homesteads around the U.S. and Canada, and without a doubt there are more miles of barbed wire out there than any other stock fence.



The smaller the lot, the tighter the fence must be.

Barbed wire fencing

I've only had one animal cut on barbed wire in forty some years and in thirty years as a veterinary field technician, I've only seen a dozen. Nearly all of these animals were injured by "bad" barbed wire fencing.

This fencing is often cheaper because it is light gauge, made outside of the U.S.A., miserable to work with or keep tight, and poorly constructed.

The biggest mistakes I've seen with barbed wire is putting too few strands on the fence, too far apart and not stretching the wire tight enough.

Saggy, baggy, cheap wire on a fence is asking for disaster; the animals will either escape their pasture to risk danger from automobile traffic or other hazards or tear themselves reaching through the fence.

Horses and cattle need at least five strands, preferably more, not more than 10 inches apart. With six strands of good quality wire, stretched very tightly on solid posts that are no farther than 14 feet apart, and a wire stay in the center (preventing any reaching through and wire stretching), stock will positively leave this fence alone for years and years.

Stays are important, especially in medium sized pastures which receive much use. They are cheap and easy to



Four rails and solid posts are nearly indestructible.

thread on the wires by “screwing” them down from the top (with the use of a fencing plier if you aren’t strong enough), evenly spacing the wires as you go.

To build a good barbed wire (or other wire fence), you absolutely must have heavy, braced corners and braces every so often on long stretches of fence. Likewise, all gates must be heavily constructed and braced to last the constant abuse they receive in daily use.

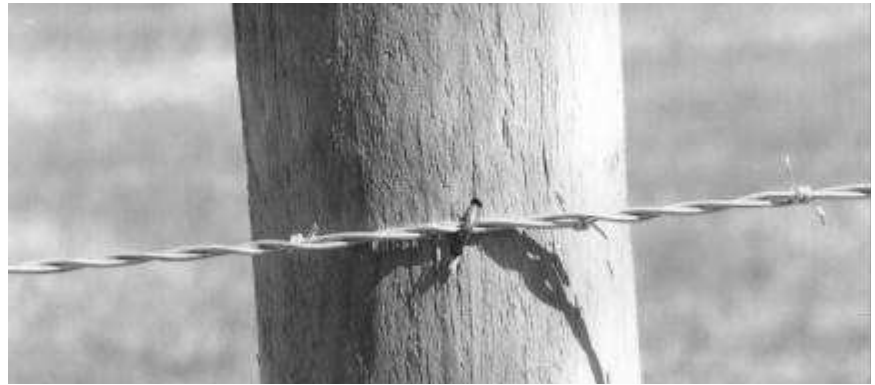
The wire may be clipped on to steel “T” posts, at least six feet long that are driven securely into the ground past the paddle, or stapled onto solid wood posts of at least seven feet long that are set at least two feet into the ground. Wood posts should have a diameter of at least six inches on the butt and four inches at the top. These posts should be treated. Personally, I do not like “green” pressure treated posts, as the warnings that come with these arsenic-laden posts deter me from using them where an animal may lick or chew them. There are alternatives, so ask your lumber dealer for a do-it-yourself treatment.

Barbed wire is not a good fence for sheep, goats, or hogs.

Good corners and braces make long-lasting fences

Corners, braces and gate posts are the foundation of a wire fence. I like to build these before I even begin to touch the rest of the fence. This way you will have your fence line already established and the posts will be well set in the ground before you are tempted to fasten wire to them.

All gate posts should be a minimum of eight inches in diameter and eight feet in length. Gate posts, on which a heavy gate will be hung, especially a gate over eight feet in length, should be twelve feet long, allowing it to be set three and a half feet in the ground, leaving eight and a half feet above ground. From the top of this post, you can run a support (cable or poles) to



Drive staples in on a diagonal to prevent splitting.

the far end of the gate, which will help take up the extreme weight of a wide gate.

Under the best of circumstances, a gate takes terrific pressure, opening and closing, catching in the wind, and being shoved on by livestock. We won’t even mention the times unknowing visitors or small children sit on the gate while it swings back and forth.



An “H” brace with “X” of twisted wire

This is why a gate post should always be set in cement. For added strength, I like to run two poles from near the top of the gate post, back to the bottom of a stout post, 10 feet back on the fence line.

All gate hinges should be heavy-duty and attached by drilled holes through the posts, not nailed or screwed on.

A drive-through gate should be a minimum of twelve feet wide. Built

any narrower, sooner or later someone will catch a post or the gate when driving through under less than ideal conditions.

Do not use lightweight “flat” aluminum or round pipe gate. Those “economy” gates are not a savings, as you’ll be replacing them frequently. And you’ll have stocks out and possibly injured in the escape. Use “bull-strong” gates, and you’ll have them for decades.

All gates, on a stretched fence, should have a “H” brace built in them, as this is where the stretch and stress of the stretched wire will come.

All corner posts should be a minimum of eight inches in diameter and eight feet long. They should be treated on the bottoms to prevent decay and breaking off. They should be either pressure-treated wood or a long-lasting native wood. Depending on the locale, you may use cedar, juniper, oak, or tamarack. Always peel the posts before use. Bark encourages rot.

Dig your post hole at least four inches larger than the butt end of your post. This allows you to tamp the fill dirt well, eliminating air pockets that loosen the post later. Measure your hand digger or a light pole if you are using a tractor digger, right at three feet. When you think your hole is deep enough, measure to be sure. One thing I’ve learned is that when you’ve been digging holes in tough soil, your guesstimate gets shallower and shall-

lower as the day wears on. The mark will not let you cheat.

For the most strength, cement in those corners, especially in small pastures and corrals. The smaller the lot, the greater the stress on the fence.

In larger pastures, I'd still recommend cementing in the corners. You'll

be happier later, even though it is more work at construction time.

If you choose not to cement, be sure to tamp in the dirt well. Only shovel in an inch or so of dirt, then tamp *very* well with a small blunt pole, or better yet, a steel tamper, until the hole is filled and mounded a bit on top to repel water.

From the corner, eight feet down the fence on either side of the corner, dig another hole for a corner bracer. This is an "H" brace.

An "H" brace is two (or more) fence posts, set well into the ground, with a stout horizontal brace fit into slight notches in the posts about a foot down from the top. This brace can be either a heavy pipe or a 4x4 (minimum), spiked in place to avoid heaving or being knocked out later.

Then, to further strengthen the brace, loop a heavy gauge wire from top of one post, down to near the bottom of the opposing post, then back to the top of the starting post. This wire should *not* be tight, as you will be twisting it to tighten it in a minute. There should be about four inches of slack. Loop and fasten the wire together securely, then staple it at top and bottom, to hold it in place. Repeat the wiring with the other posts. You will end up with an "X" of looped wires, crossing at the brace pole.

Insert a short (18-inch) length of hardwood, small diameter pole, a bit thicker than a broom handle, "in and out" of one set of wire loop. Then begin twisting it to tighten. When it is snug, stop. Leave the wood in place, securing it against the brace pole. Repeat with the other wire loop. Then go back and really tighten the first. Repeat with the second loop until the entire set is one hard, stout unit.

An "H" brace should be built on each side of every corner post, then every thousand feet down your fence line, depending on the soil and kind of fencing you will be stretching. Look at your neighbors, who have fence like yours. Pick a good, solid fence and copy the length between braces. Too few and the fence stress will pull the corners in and let the fence sag. A brace should also be used with every gate on the place. Without one, the gate will become a weak spot in the fence.



A very strong fence: rails with welded stock panels

Fence posts

With any stretched fencing, you have your choice of fence posts. Either wood, with a minimum top diameter of four inches or steel "T" posts can be used. If you choose wood, be sure to treat the bottom to prevent rot in climates where dampness in the soil is a problem.

These fence posts should be dug or driven into the ground no farther than 12 feet apart. The one exception is when you use single wire (as barbed or smooth wire) fencing, with stays. Here, you can go 16 feet between posts, with a wire stay woven down to separate all wires evenly. This keeps the fence from sagging, and prevents greedy animals from shoving their heads through the wires to get at that proverbial greener-on-the-other-side grass.

When stapling wire of any kind onto a wood post, be sure to use 1-inch livestock staples. I emphasize this, as we rebuilt a wire fence in the moose-laden wilderness, which had been fastened to wood posts with chicken wire staples. These lightweight staples won't resist the weight of livestock and they sure didn't slow down the moose.

Drive each staple in on a diagonal, so that each point enters the wood in a different strip of grain. This eliminates splitting and makes it hold years later without loosening. Don't drive the staple in so that it dents the wire, as this weakens the wire, as it does when you bend a wire back and forth.

If you choose to use steel posts, don't skimp on quality. Use heavy-duty posts, which cost pennies more but will not bend or break easily. Get at least 6-foot posts and pound them in until the paddle is underground an inch. For safety, be sure you use a steel post pounder. I've seen terrible accidents when folks tried to pound 'em in with a tractor bucket or sledge hammer. And hold the pounder by the



Fence in progress. Note the cemented-in gate post.

handles. I smashed my own finger (when I knew better) recently by holding the driver below the handles. Your hands slip and your finger gets between the driver and post. Not a pretty sight.

Stretching the fence

Stretching your fencing material well will make your fence last years longer. You can not stretch fencing with a hammer, crowbar or by hand. You must use a fence stretcher, anchored to a solid object, past where you will fasten it. This object can be a tree with a medium chain run around it to anchor your stretcher to, a pickup truck, or even the next "H" brace. You must use a solid object and really stretch that wire. I like a ratchet-type stretcher, as at 50-something, I don't have the strength I used to, so I "cheat" and slip a piece of pipe on the handle of the stretcher to get that extra notch. (You big guys can skip this, as it could get dangerous, overstretching a wire.)

One tip: if you are stretching fencing over very uneven ground, you may have to stretch, fasten to several posts, then loosen the stretcher to get down a dip or ravine, pull the wire down to fasten it tightly, readjust the

stretcher again, and continue. In rough country, stretching wire gets to be a ballet dance. In extreme ravines, you'll also need to anchor a single post with lots of stress on it by wiring a heavy rock to the post or the stress will pull the post out of the ground.

When stretching woven wire, welded wire or chain link, you'll either need two fence stretchers or to weave a pipe down through the wire to pull on all the wire, at the same time, so it stretches squarely.

And these wires must be capped with either a pipe, plank, strand of barbed wire or electric wire, or stock will smash it down over time, guaranteed.

Plank, board, & rail fence

Ideally, we'd all like wood fences to enclose our stock pastures. They are pretty, long lasting and safe for the animals. Unfortunately, I see a lot of these fences in disrepair and looking pretty awful. Why?

The answer is usually that folks cut corners in building. While one-inch boards are used on some horse farms, you'll discover that they are hardwood, and are in large pastures. As most of us don't have hundreds of acres for pastures, we have to beef up

the fence, using two inch planks, instead of one inch boards. A stoutly built plank fence, with the planks nailed up quite close together will hold sheep, hogs, and goats, if the fence is tall enough.

If you choose to use rails, you'll be happiest with four-inch rails, nailed to the inside of the fence. This keeps the stock from pushing the rails off the posts; their weight leans the rails into the posts, instead.

And use enough rails on a fence. Three is minimum, spaced close enough that a horse or cow can not get their head through, conveniently. You can leave a little more space under the fence; few crawl under. Two rails does not make a safe horse or cattle fence. Sheep and goats can not be safely fenced with a rail fence, as they can easily slip through the rails and predators can get into the pasture, as well. Hogs simply consider a rail fence a joke.

Don't cut corners by placing your posts too far apart and using long rails or planks. I guarantee that your fence will look awful in a few years and you'll be chasing escaped animals. Posts should be a maximum of 12 feet apart, and as with wire fencing, they should be a bare minimum of four inches at the top, preferably more.

It's best to overlap your rails or planks, but I know that overlapped planks don't look as good; folks like a nice, even fence line. In this case, pre-drill the holes, before spiking the planks to the post, to avoid splitting the planks. These splits weaken the fence dramatically.

After the fence is up, give it a coat of a non-toxic (some animals will chew or lick) oil based stain to protect it from rot. I hate paint, because you-know-who has to go out every few years to scrape and re-paint that nice white fence. I've turned, instead, to a penetrating stain. It looks nice, and requires far less maintenance.

Small pens that'll last

The smaller the area livestock is kept in, the more stress it will receive. Leaning, jostling, kicking animals beat a fence up. Some animals, such as hogs and dairy goats are often best housed in a smaller lot, at least until a good, solidly fenced pasture is built.

While a stout plank fence is very good for hogs, goats really like to see out and are not happy in a planked fence. Instead, I use stout wooden corner posts, with seven-foot steel T posts, every eight feet. On this frame, I hang 16-foot welded stock panels. Goats with horns sometimes get stuck in the openings in the wire. By running an electric wire inside the pen, this can easily be prevented. Likewise, if you have a goat who likes to jump, a hot wire run along six inches to a foot on top of the welded panel will quickly end her capers.

Jack-leg fencing

Jack-leg fencing, in some locales known as "buck fencing," is common and picturesque in the west. Jack-leg fence is made up of a series of Xs, with the cross notched into each heavy post, nearer the top of the jack than center. The usual length of jack-leg posts is five feet for horses and cattle.

One advantage of jack-leg fencing are that the posts do not have to be set into the ground, as are all other fence posts. As there is much rocky ground in the west, this type of fencing has been popular for over a century.

Another plus is that the jacks make fencing up and down canyons and mountainsides much easier, as they conform to irregular ground well.

And because the bottoms of the jacks rest on the ground, they are less apt to rot than posts set into the ground. Even if they do rot a bit on the bottoms, the fence remains solid and stable.

Of course, as with any type of fencing, there are a few negatives. A jack-

leg fence, especially when one uses rails, is both expensive and labor-intensive. When one has their own source of lodgepole pine or other jack material, along with plentiful rails, the cost is nearly eliminated. But both the jacks and rails must be peeled with a draw knife or the bark will cause them to rot in very short order. And it does take time to carefully cut notches in the jack-legs and spike the jacks together.

Likewise, for the best fence, the builder must split or chainsaw half of the rail where it is spiked onto the jack. This lets the rail sit flat against the leg, giving a good base for the spikes to sock into. Without the flat surface, the rail will eventually rock back and forth, loosening it.

Another hint is to use *two* 30 to 50 penny spikes on each rail, not in the same grain (causes splitting). If this is not done, the fence will eventually lean downhill here and there, making the fence ugly and weak.

I would not recommend jack-leg fencing for any areas that are not basically arid. I think moisture would wick up through the bottom of the jack-legs and eventually rot the entire jack.

Fences for livestock (in order of suitability)

Horses: Plank, jack-leg, rail, welded stock panels, heavy gauge woven wire, barbed wire, electric fencing (beefing up another type of fence or dividing pastures)

Cattle: Jack-leg, rail, barbed wire, heavy gauge woven wire, electric fencing (beefing up another type of fence or dividing pastures)

Sheep: Welded stock panels, heavy gauge woven wire, electric fencing (beefing up another type of fence, dividing pastures or keeping predators out of pasture)

Goats: Welded stock panels, heavy gauge woven wire, re-enforced with electric fencing to keep the goats from leaning through or jumping over

For more
Jackie Clay

go to:

www.backwoodshome.com

the woven wire, electric fencing to divide pastures

Hogs: two-inch plank, welded pipe, welded stock panels, heavy gauge woven wire, re-enforced with electric fencing to keep the pigs from digging under or leaning on woven wire fencing *or* on the outside, as well, to keep predators from entering the hog pen

Poultry: Poultry poses special problems. Not only must birds be fenced in, to keep them out of the flower beds and gardens, but they must be heavily protected against predators who would consider them a special delicacy. These predators include not only such animals as foxes, coyotes, possums, raccoons, bobcats, and stray dogs, but also hawks and owls.

First of all, poultry must be fenced in with at least heavy gauge poultry netting, either six foot high or less if you are going to include a top. The top is advisable in areas with many homestead chickens in the area, as hawks and owls get used to raiding chicken yards for dinner. There is light gauge (cheaper) poultry netting, but it is only good for the top of a six foot high pen; it won't hold out a fox or other predator.

The poultry yard needs to be built of just as stout materials as you would a cattle fence. I've seen many built with three inch corner posts that wouldn't hold even poultry netting without sagging. Dig your corner posts in at least two and a half feet deep and brace them to the next post in line each way, for strength.

Hang your wire on the outside of poultry yards. Chickens and turkeys will put less strain on the fence than will a chicken killing stray dog.

To be extra safe, dig a ditch a foot deep all around the bottom of the fence line and bury 2-inch by 4-inch

welded fence a foot deep, extending it up two feet, re-enforcing the poultry netting. If you can spare the cash, build your entire poultry yard with 2 by 4 welded fencing, as it is much stronger than poultry netting.

An electric wire, run six inches up from the ground and two feet from the ground, on the outside of the poultry yard, will deter almost every potential predator.

A poultry netting top on the yard will prevent any hungry hawks or owls from entering it. We had one inventive hawk who flew down into the yard, then hopped through the chicken door and made off with a baby chick every day. The yard was huge, and we could not put a top on it. But we have two good old labrador retrievers, and by letting the dogs stay in the coop for a morning, Mr. Hawk got the surprise of his life. Instead of his tender chickie dinner, he was greeted by two huge mouths full of very white teeth. One must always be creative on the homestead.

Be sure to staple hardware cloth over all windows. Some predators, such as raccoons, are very good at breaking windows at night, to steal poultry.

Steps in fencing

1. Measure and draw your fence on paper. Study the way it will work.

2. Dig in your corners and gate posts, setting as many in cement as you can afford.

3. Hang gates.

4. Stretch either a wire (if you will be using barbed wire, either as the fence, or to use as the top wire reinforcement) or a heavy string from gate post to corner to establish your fence line. Eyeballing a fence line never works.

5. Dig in wooden posts or pound steel T posts on your fence line. If the line is long, add an H brace every 1,000 feet for strength.

6. Stretch your wire or nail on planks or rails.

7. Add any necessary electric wire to reinforce the fence.

Although building fences is one of the least enjoyable tasks on the homestead, when a good one is finished, you can truly lean back and behold it with pleasure. It will hold your animals and poultry for years to come, safe from harm. We can't ask for much more than that. Δ

Ask Jackie

Storing flour and sugar, canning butter, fruits and veggies for cold climates, solving “mushy” canning problems, canning in tin cans, growing your own cornmeal, buying a pressure canner, and more

I read your article about storing flour and sugar in the Jan/Feb 2002 issue. Does storing these items in plastic bags cause them to sweat?

Also I have a question about canning butter. I prepare the jars as usual, melt the butter very hot, pour the melted butter into the jars. I don't have a water bath, so I just use the pressure cooker. I bring the pressure up to 10 lbs. and then shut it off, let it cool. The jars all seal. The butter is good to use; it just tastes like melted butter. My question is, how much time is adequate to can butter to kill the bacteria for long time storage?

Denise Grandstaff
hambush@worldnet.att.net

When I store flour and sugar in plastic bags, I store paper bags of “store” flour and sugar inside plastic bags for added moisture and insect protection. For instance, for long-term storage, I find a sturdy cardboard box, large enough to hold two 25-lb. bags of flour or four 10-lb. bags of sugar. (50 pounds is the most I want to carry around. Forty is better, but flour is more cheaply bought in 25-lb. sacks.) Then I line the box with an open plastic bag and carefully lay the two sacks of flour or four bags of sugar in the box. I draw up the plastic bag, excluding as much air as possible, then seal it with duct tape, in addition to the twist-tie, to be absolutely sure no meal moths can

get in to make weevils in the flour later on or moisture can get in to make my sugar rock hard. Then I tape the box shut with duct tape and mark the box. I've never had any problem with sweating using this method.

I've never canned butter (yet), but just last fall I discovered a way to can cheese that would work just as well with butter and might result in an even better tasting end product.

I sterilize wide-mouth pint jars, then dice up cheese in roughly inch square pieces. These jars are set into a roasting pan with enough hot water in it to come nearly to the screw rim on the jars. Put the roaster on the stove, on medium heat, and add enough cheese cubes (or butter) to nearly fill the jar. As it melts, carefully add a little more at a time, until the jar is full to within half an inch of the top. All the cheese or butter is melted at this point. Then quickly wipe the jar rim clean and put hot, previously boiled lids on and screw down the ring firmly tight.

As cheese and butter are dairy products, they are acid foods, containing lactic acid and therefore will not support “killer bacteria,” such as salmonella. So you can process the jars in a water bath canner.

I know you say you don't have a water bath canner, but I'll bet you do. Do you have any pot or kettle deep enough to fill with water an inch over your jars? A soup pot? Even a large



Jackie Clay

stainless steel or aluminum mixing bowl will do. My grandmother used her copper boiler in which she used to boil water to do her laundry. You can use any such container to water bath can. The only **must**, besides water depth, is that you must keep the jars off the container's bottom to prevent the jars from breaking. Any wire rack, such as a cake cooling rack or even a folded kitchen towel will work. It also helps if you have some sort of top for the pot; even a cookie or pizza pan will do. This gets the water boiling faster after you put your jars in.

I water bath my cheese for 40 minutes, the same as tomatoes, which are also acid, as I have absolutely no “guide.” My first batch of cheese is still sealed and tastes great when opened.

You won't die from eating “bad” cheese or butter. The worst that can happen is that it could mold (cheese) or go rancid (butter). Mine's keeping just fine, and I expect it to continue that way for a long time to come.

I don't like to experiment with canning too much. With some foods it could be dangerous. But sometimes the experts don't care much about keeping homestead produce such as

cheese or butter; they're more attuned to normal canning, such as tomatoes, jam, and pickles. So we have to do the best we can, but as safely as we can.

Jackie

When I can vegetables, meat or stew, I follow the directions to the letter. Everything except jams and jelly turns out mushy and cloudy, like it's on its way to becoming baby food. I have a friend in medical practice and he tested it for Botulism and other bacteria, and it's fine. What am I doing wrong?

When I make pickles, they always go mushy too.

Is it possible to make pickles with something like Everclear, vodka or gin? I'd like to try it and show off to my friends on Super Bowl Sunday. (They're always bringing weird things.)

As you're from Minnesota, you must know what fruits and vegetables grow best up here. Can you give me a list so I can go through the seed catalogs, knowing what to look for?

Do you know a good source of herbs, like mints, mustard, horseradish, as well as native edibles, so that I can get a good start on an herb garden?

Dennis C. Nelson, Nevis, MN

Well Dennis, I see you keep busy, too. But I'll bet you're tired of cloudy, mushy canned food, huh? My best guess is that you have water with a lot of minerals in it. This causes cloudy canned foods and soft, cloudy pickles. If you have naturally soft water available (neighbor or friend), I'd recommend hauling a few five-gallon jugs home at canning time, in which to can your fruits and vegetables.

I'd also have your pressure gauge on your canner checked to ensure it's reading the pressure properly, as an additional problem may be that you may accidentally be canning at too high

a pressure. Processing for too long a time or using too high a pressure will result in mushy canned foods.

Another thought: you say "go mushy." Is this after storage? Could the jars be freezing during the winter? I had to keep a wood stove going in my Minnesota basement to keep my canning and root cellar crops from freezing during the worst of the winter. Frozen canned goods are good to eat after freezing, if the seals are still good; tight and indented. But the quality of the food is definitely much worse—cloudy and mushy. I learned this when much of my canned goods froze in the U-Haul truck during our "trying to move to British Columbia" fiasco. I'm still trying to use up the canned goods that froze, but some of the green beans, carrots, potatoes, and fruit is not the best. I use it up bit by bit, in mixed dishes, and the fruit in baked desserts.

A tip, besides heavily mineralized water for mushy pickles, don't over-boil your pickles or they'll get soft. When the recipe says "bring to a boil and boil one minute," do just that. Three minutes will make soft, unappetizing pickles.

Sorry, I can't find a recipe for pickles made with alcohol. Anybody out there who can help Dennis?

Minnesota is not one of the easiest climates in which to grow fruits and vegetables. Yet it isn't that bad or we wouldn't be planning on moving back.

Here's a partial list of what's done well for us there, and in other less-than-hospitable climates. (In the mountains of the West, we've had snow every month of the year, but always still had a great garden.)

Fruits for colder growing zones:

- Most strawberries (check for "hardy")
- Lathan, Boyne, and Heritage red raspberries
- All rhubarb
- Many blueberries
- John Robertson black raspberry

- Fireside (Gurneys), Harlson, Sweet Sixteen, Prairie Spy apples
- Sungold and Moongold apricots
- Reliance peach (you may have to provide protection in the winter, wrapping with burlap or planting semi-dwarf in sheltered location)
- Northstar pie cherry
- Pears and domestic plums are somewhat "experimental" in many parts of Minnesota; sometimes they work and sometimes they don't. Give 'em a try. I was pleased with most of my experiments.

Vegetable varieties I've had good results with in cold climates:

- Corn: True Gold (open pollinated), Kandy Kwik (hybrid), Sundance (hybrid) Peppers: King of the North (bell)
- Tomatoes: Early Cascade (Hybrid), Oregon Spring (open pollinated, Goliath)
- Cantaloupes: Minnesota Midget, Hybrid Alaska
- Watermelon (any, but start inside in peat or paper pots)
- Pumpkin: Howden

Now, the rest of mainstream vegetables will do well in Minnesota, so I didn't include them. Of course you must start your tomatoes and peppers indoors and the melons will grow more reliably if you do likewise.

I grow a whole lot of old, open pollinated varieties, as well, and I'm "breeding back" from hybrids to get open pollinated varieties with the same basic characteristics as the hybrid ancestors, which is where the sweet corn variety, True Gold, came from. I'm no scientist, but I'm having pretty good results, especially with my third generation non-hybrid Early Cascade tomatoes. I don't get too serious with my garden. It feeds us, and I have fun.

One tip for northern growers: buy and make use of Walls 'O Water. These water-filled plastic tipis let you

get a good month's start on tomatoes, peppers, and other warm-soil loving plants (melons & cukes, too). Today, May 22nd, it's snowing a foot and will be down to 20° tonight, and those plants are not just surviving; they're *growing* happily. This product is a God-send for northern gardeners.

One place to find herb seeds, horse-radish, and native plants is good old Gurneys at 110 Capital Street, Yankton, SD 57079 or on the Web at mySEASONS.com.

Of course there are many more great seedhouses and nurseries out there. Good growing.

Jackie

My mom used to can many years ago, and I have a quantity of canning lids left from her. She died in '73 and the lids were bought before then. Are they safe to use? I know they are relatively cheap to replace, but is there a life limit?

We are considering buying a vacuum-packing tool to seal meats and vegetables and freeze them. The bags made for that process seem to be pretty expensive, however. Have you heard of alternates in bagging products to freeze?

Denise Cline, Detroit, MI

I probably shouldn't tell you this. Someone out there will scream. I've used my mother and mother-in-law's old lids (priced at 24¢ a box. Does that tell you something?) several times with great results. The rubber compound on the lids is thicker than modern lids, and the lids are actually heavier. I do make sure they boil a minute to soften the rubber compound, as it could be a bit hard from long storage. Don't use any with cracks or crumbly rubber compound, however.

I don't freeze much of anything, for fear of losing it due to power problems or malfunctions of the freezer. The vacuum bags are a special plastic, made to seal under heat, and I

don't know of a like product that is cheaper that you could substitute. However, I usually had good luck by just using zip-lock freezer bags and making sure nearly all of the air was out before zipping them shut.

Good luck with your gardening and canning. I got my start in your present city, at the tender age of three.

Jackie

Can you please tell me the procedure for canning in tin cans? I have the sealer and cans, and I have made a few test cans, but I am unsure how to actually pressure cook the contents, then seal the lids.

Matt, LaCrosse, WI

I'll be glad to. I don't use tin cans because of the cost of the non-reusable cans. Jars can be used, year after year, generation after generation. But, seeing how you have the cans and the sealer, here's how to do it.

First, be absolutely sure your sealer is working properly, creating air-tight seals on your cans. You can do this by filling a can half full of water, then dropping it into a kettle full of boiling water. Watch for air bubbles escaping from the can. If there are none, your sealer is fine. If there are, adjust your sealer to crimp tighter.

All food processed in tin cans must be heated to 170° before sealing the can, in order to drive out any air in the food, as this air cannot escape as it does when you use jars with two-piece lids. You can do this by filling the cans, then placing them in a water bath canner rack, with water to within two inches of the top of the cans. Put the lid on the canner and boil until the internal temperature of the food in the cans reaches 170°. Wipe can rim, then immediately seal with lid and proceed to next step called for, either water bath canning or pressure canning.

The next difference between canning with cans and canning with jars

is that when you remove the tin cans from the canner, following processing, you must cool them quickly by immersing them in a sink full of cold water. (If you did this with jars, they would shatter.)

Just like canning with jars, each high acid food, such as fruit, is canned using a water bath canner, with differing lengths of time for processing. And low acid foods, such as vegetables and meats, are canned using a pressure canner, also for various lengths of time, depending on what you are canning. The only book I have seen which addresses using tin cans in home canning is *Putting Food By* by Ruth Hertzberg, Beatrice Vaughan, and Janet Green (Stephen Green Press). You may want to pick up a copy so you will have the times needed for each food you wish to can.

Jackie

Although we have limited space, I would like to grow a small patch of corn to use for cornmeal. Could you advise me, as to what types/varieties would be best for this? I have little experience with corn. Also, any tips on grinding the corn and storage would be greatly appreciated.

Wendy Fyfe, Brush, CO

Growing corn for your own cornmeal is not only a satisfying way to provide tasty, nutritious cornmeal for your family, without chemicals, but it's serious *fun*, too. There really isn't any corn you can't use for cornmeal; I've saved the second ears on an acre of super-sweet hybrid corn, dried on the stalk, for pretty darned good cornmeal. I've also ground plain-old cow corn, dent corn from the farm field, which is the traditional cornmeal corn for most white families. Native Americans usually grew a flint corn for cornmeal. It is tougher and stores better, resisting insect damage better. A dent corn is shriveled in appearance, with a dent in the top. A flint corn is shiny, smooth, and rounded on

top, having less soft “flour” inside. Popcorn is a flint-type corn and makes a long-storing corn for cornmeal. This is why most preparedness companies sell popcorn for grinding in their long-term storage supplies.

We grind what we are growing this year or last. In fact, well dried corn will keep for years just fine if kept safe from moisture, insects, and rodents. Our favorite flour corns are Native American corns: Santo Domingo Blue (Native Seeds/SEARCH) and Cherokee White Flour. But you can use just about *any* corn you like, with varieties available through most common seed catalogs.

I grind most of my cornmeal with a hand powered grain mill, set first on coarse, then on fine. This produces a cornmeal a bit finer than store-bought cornmeal. I also have ground it using a mano and metate, which is basically a flat stone with a hollow in it and a two-hand wide round rolling pin-shaped stone. This makes very nice, fine corn flour in a short time and is fun to use. It does our soul good to use ancient techniques from time to time.

I find it's best to store the shelled corn in airtight containers, then grind fresh cornmeal just before you plan on using it, as home ground cornmeal is more nutritious, with all the corn intact, but it does go rancid more quickly than store cornmeal.

By the way, it doesn't take acres to provide enough cornmeal for your family; a small patch is all it takes with good gardening practices.

Jackie

I would like to purchase a pressure canner and learn to can. I was wondering what brand and model of pressure canner that you use. I plan to grow some tomatoes this year and those will be my first attempt at canning. I think that I have read in the magazine that canned tomatoes should be peeled. Is there a particu-

lar reason to peel them? I am not bothered by tomatoes that have the skins on them.

Ron Szczepanski
rszczepanski@dellepro.com

My old canner is really not a “canner” at all. Let me explain. Twenty-seven years ago, my former husband and I were at a State Hospital auction and there was a brand new, *huge* autoclave, used for sterilizing surgical instruments and bandages. Now an old autoclave was nothing but a very large pressure canner, so I bought it for \$50. It holds seven or eight quarts and eighteen pints all at the same time. It, like me, is getting a bit old, but it still performs very well. But it weighs a ton. I have two smaller pressure canners, picked up at yard sales, a National and a Presto. Both work fine, but require replacement of the ring gasket from time to time.

I plan on buying a new canner this year, through Lehman's—their #921, which holds 7 quarts or 19 pints and costs \$159. This is a smaller version of my huge monster, having no gasket (steel to steel) and having a pressure gauge. As I only have one child home, instead of eight, my canning needs are much less. I also have a bad back (no, not from my homesteading, from an old accident), so lifting a 40-pound empty canner onto and off from the stove is getting old.

While you can use your pressure canner to do tomatoes, you can more easily use a water bath canner—those big, blue enameled kettles with a cover and inner rack.

Tomatoes are extremely easy to can, and therefore make a perfect “first try” at canning. The reason you peel the tomatoes is that the canned peels are pretty tough and tend to roll up into unpalatable straw-like pieces. Tomatoes are real easy to peel. Just drop a few into a kettle of boiling water and boil about a minute. Then fish them out with a slotted spoon and plunk them into a sinkful of cold

water. The skins split and slip right off; no real peeling to it. Then if you make salsa or tomato sauce, you have no tough peels to deal with.

Jackie

Help! I can't seem to find information on making and mixing my own flour for breads! Can you tell me how and what do I put in freshly ground flour from wheat, oats, rice and barley? Thank you so much.

Pat Johnson
Peace733@aol.com

I'll be glad to help. Grinding your own flours is only half the fun; making rolls and breads from them is even better, especially when you get to eat them. I'm what you call an experimental cook; sometimes I just throw in a handful of this or that to see how it turns out, so I've learned not to be too serious about recipes (after a few years of cooking, of course).

Grinding is easy. You can even use your blender for small amounts. But I advise springing for a hand powered grain mill from any one of *BHM's* advertisers. You don't have to get the very best (i.e. most expensive—the cheaper mills work quite well). Then simply set it up, according to the simple directions, and try it out. Set the grind to coarse and try it, then to medium, and finally to fine. Probably the fine will be more coarse than the white flour from the store, but that's just great for homemade breads.

If you want finer flour, simply regrind.

As for what to put in the flour, you can substitute a portion of the wheat flour with many other varieties of grain flour, from amaranth to rice, oat, and even leached acorn flour. You usually do need a good portion of wheat flour to get the bread or rolls to rise, as wheat flour contains gluten. Use any good whole grain bread or roll recipe as a base and work from there, experimenting.

For instance, I often add ground oatmeal, ground sunflower seeds, and cornmeal to my whole wheat bread. It makes a dense but very tasty bread. I've gotten so I can hardly eat (to be polite) store bought whole wheat bread; it seems so mushy and limp.

One tip for using whole wheat flour: add a portion of very warm water to the flour, making a thick batter, before adding any white flour or other grain flour or your yeast. This hot water seems to release more gluten from the fresh wheat flour, making your normally dense whole grain bread rise better. Your hot batter must cool to lukewarm before you add the yeast or the heat will kill the yeast. Good baking.

Jackie

I read an article several years ago where you talked about canning nuts. Can I have these directions again, please? Also, do you answer via email or only in the publication?

Caroline Waldner
caroline@brencomahine

Sure, glad to. Nuts are so easy to can; it only takes a few minutes, and little work. Here's how: Sterilize pint jars by boiling them, then keep dry and hot. Boil your lids and keep them in warm water. Spread your nut meats out in a single layer on cookie sheets in the oven and toast at 250° for about 30 minutes, stirring every 10 minutes for even toasting; do not brown. Fill dry, hot, sterilized jars with nut meats to within 1/2" of the jar top.

Now, the old method, which I've successfully used, is to place hot lid on jar, tighten down ring firmly tight and place jars into a pan of boiling water, coming to just below the rings. Process for 30 minutes.

I've switched to using a conventional water bath canner, covering the jars, as with other foods. The processing time is the same. No, the nuts do not get wet, provided you screw

down those rings firmly tight (without force, though).

Or you can pressure can nut meats at 5 pounds pressure (adjusting pressure upward for altitude, if necessary; see canning manual for altitude pressure adjustments) for 10 minutes.

See, wasn't that easy?

I only answer questions in *BHM*. I'm old fashioned and have no computer, only an aging word processor. And I'm also hugely busy with daily homestead chores and activities to answer via e-mail.

Jackie

I would like to know more about how to regulate the heat on my new wood cook stove. Even when I have a nice hot fire going in the firebox, my oven temperature is still only 175° to 200° F. The controls I have are a flue damper on the stove pipe, a direct draw, a slide bar draw and two draft wheels that allow air in. I was wondering if the proper combination of open/shut controls might direct more heat to the oven, instead of it going mostly to the stove top.

The directions that came with it were mainly directed at installation and safety, leaving most of the actual operation left up to my imagination.

David Roehrig
david@nom.com

Yes! You must fine-tune your fire pattern, in order to get a hot oven. Every wood cook stove has an oven damper. This is usually a sliding bar/knob at the right rear stove top. There is a hollow space around the oven. When the oven damper is closed, the heat no longer goes straight up the chimney, but is circulated around the oven. With the stove cold, you can lift the lids and peek to the right and down with a flashlight, and see this. The fire/heat travels over the top of the oven, down the right side, under it, then up behind it and out the stove pipe.

Depending on your stove and stove pipe/chimney, you may have to also partially close our stove damper after the fire is nicely hot.

You have to build your fire and truly pre-heat your oven. As with a wood stove, it takes from fifteen minutes to half an hour to get the oven heated up well. And the more you open the door to check, the longer it takes.

If yours was an older stove, I'd suspect that the oven vents (the slots around the oven, itself) needed cleaning. When soot gets built up inside, you must scrape it down the sides and out the little clean-out door on the bottom, so the heat travels well. If it does not, the soot acts like an insulator, not allowing the oven to heat hot enough to bake correctly.

You can tell if you are closing the oven damper by peeking at the flame. If it draws right up the stove pipe, it is open, and the oven will not bake. If it is closed, the flame will fan out over the top of the oven to the right.

I wouldn't trade my wood kitchen range for the most "modern" gas stove going. We won't even talk about electric stoves!

Jackie

**Want to read more by
Jackie Clay?**



**You can order
her CD
on page 88.**

Letters

(Dear Readers - Thank you for writing to Backwoods Home Magazine. The opinions and suggestions we receive from our readers are very important to us. We regret that we are no longer able to print or individually respond to every letter received due to the volume. We do read every letter received, and pass them along to the editor or writer concerned. We print a selection from our mail that best represents the views and concerns of our readers.

— The Editors)

Prisoner subscription

I am writing this letter to reply to your letter dated 5-29-02. I must say that I am very disappointed in your actions in having refused my money for a subscription to your publication.

First let me say that I am a prisoner who is serving 188 months for a conspiracy charge, having had my constitutional rights trashed, my freedom taken, my family destroyed by this out of control tyrannical government of yours.

I also want to point out that I have been reading Backwoods Home for years, and that since being incarcerated over these last several years reading Backwoods Home has been a great source of inspiration to continue on with my hopes and vision of returning to the woods, and the lifestyle that I so long for each day in Big Brothers Gulag.

So it is after sending in my \$21.95 that I earned working in a sweatshop slave factory at 1 dollar an hour so that I can receive your great magazine of articles on the importance of protecting our constitutional rights, and how the government is getting out of control, and having truly believed you meant what you wrote about what we need to do to protect what's left of our rights, I find that you are just so much bullshit.

Since 9/11 I see that you have caved in to the pressure of the gestapo and are now following the party line. You must be very proud comrades, hail Bush. I must say I am glad that you

sent me back my money because I don't like giving my money to cowards.

First I have never had any problems with my subscriptions, second articles on guns are not a problem in the feds, we receive Gunworld, Field & Stream, Shotgun News, etc., etc. So therefore I must assume that you buckled under pressure before there was any. I am sure you can justify your actions by saying to yourself (they are only criminals), but don't worry you will all be "criminals" soon and then who will you turn to in order to take a stand, weak spineless publishers such as yourself. Good Luck!!!

Jonathan Levesque
Ray Brook, NY

You are right, of course. I'll reinstate your subscription, at my expense, and in the future we'll not use such a broad brush when dealing with prisoners.

But a word of explanation is in order so we don't look as mean and nasty as you portray us. We stopped accepting subscriptions from prisoners several months ago only after getting several threatening letters from prisoners who were angry that they were not getting their issues. One said he will sue us, others hinted at violence. We had to write letters to various agencies the prisoners complained to, and the time to handle these complaints was far more costly than the price we earned from the subscriptions. Not to mention that my staff was worried that some angry prisoners might come by the shop and kill them after they got out.

The reason some prisoners were not getting their issues was because BHM is banned in some prisons and we are clipped (of gun, booze, even political articles) in others. But that fact does

not placate some angry prisoners. We simply tried to save ourselves some hassle and possible future trouble. We did not cave into pressure from anyone.

All of us in the freedom movement are well aware that America imprisons a higher percentage of its population than any other country, and that most of those incarcerated are not there for having committed violent crimes. And as editors producing a magazine that often criticizes our Government, we understand we too are at risk, especially since the events of September 11 have led to far broader Government powers to seek out people they decide are "conspiring" against it.

We'll reverse our short-lived and ill-conceived subscription policy regarding prisoners, and I'd like to thank you for reminding me that freedom involves inconvenience and risk, as well as sticking up for the rights of those whose freedom has been taken away by an out of control Government.

—Dave

A Constitution for everyone

I was afraid I would have to let my subscription lapse as I am (was) unemployed. I'm a professional boat captain (license etcetera 19 years experience) but the marine trades have all been reduced to practically nil since WWII. Lots of reasons most of which work out to corporate greed and/or government interference.

I first became interested in "survival skills" while in the boy scouts in the early 60s (Eagle Award 1963).

I have been a subscriber since '98 and was depressed to think that I might have to give up eating or BHM. But...I found a job painting house interiors for a local realtor. Minimum wage but tons better than the other choice. Starvation is so uncomfortable, at least for the first week or ten days I'm told.

When I get back to making better money I'd like to buy several of the magazines in your bookstore and the Outlaw Special if it's still on...

Currently living in a small town (12,000) and looking at moving to the south Texas "woods" SW of San Antonio...

Do you folks know of any Libertarian type ladies in that area looking for a fairly self-sufficient, handy around the homestead, not-quite-used-up boat captain?

Ok, ok, I plan on an ad in your personals column as soon as money allows.

Boy, would I like to sit down with John Silveira, Dave and O.E. MacDougal and talk about possibilities for finding a way to wake up Americans. No, not armed insurrection, I'm thinking...boy, would I like to be rich enough to pay for printing up a copy of "Dictatorship" and "Constitution & Declaration of Independence" for every American over the age of 5. Probably wouldn't work...

I sure hope O.E. & John are wrong about there being "nothing" left available as positive action. Ya see I'm allergic to jail and execution so I'd like to find a way to work this out without having to deal with either of those options. (Use the media? Infomercials? Video game?) Use the "mind drug" (TV) against the Fascism? Fire to fight fire?

I like the video game thing. If it would work it would hit right at the "youth" (next generation of voters/citizens).

What do you think? (I'm a survivor, I really don't like giving up...)

Gregory Gooch, Beeville, TX

ASG subscriber

As for me ASG (or whatever they called themselves) was already losing it. It was some time before I discovered why I was receiving BHM. I was going to get a subscription anyway. This makes it easier all around. Thank you.

I'm called Shadow here, and I'm buying 41 acres here in O'Brien. My backyard fence holds back forest circus land, the beautiful Kalmiopsis, and the coast (nobody behind me.) I've been a design-guy for many people in southern Oregon for alternative energy houses for several decades now, as well as being a peace-keeper for nearly 3 decades.) I know what works and what doesn't.

My land will be a healing center and spiritual retreat with Native American medicine. The land is basically bare now, but my inheritance is forth-coming and then things will happen.

My home will be all solar with hydro from my back mountain. A shop will be included with a generator (diesel) as a main power source.

You see, the power company says \$10-12,000 for grid power to be put in. Well, for that kind of \$ I can build a nice solar system, and I won't have to keep paying for it. (Yah!) I figure 24V (easier converting) with the shop generator 10-12 Kw for back-up charging in the winter.

You guys have a dynamite publication. Keep it up.

Shadow Nicholas, O'Brien, OR

Professional military

I greatly enjoy your (John Silveira's) writing. I find your explanations help clarify an otherwise murky mess of seemingly unrelated events. I agree with much of what you say. But not all.

You have stated that a professional military is replacing the citizen soldier and that this is bad news for personal freedoms. If I understand you correctly you are saying that a professional military will do to citizens what the citizen soldier will not. Correct me if I am wrong but didn't MacArthur use citizen soldiers to shoot the WWI vets in D.C. when they demanded their bonus. Hasn't the Gov. used citizen soldiers to break up, sometimes kill, railroad and coal miners strikes? Wasn't it National

Guard that shot those kids at Kent State? The reverse is also true. Wasn't it National Guard who let the Los Angeles looters run wild and kill people because the politicians didn't want to alienate their constituency? More significant still is that in all the above cases the citizen soldiers used were local men. It wasn't necessary to draw men from, say Wisconsin, to do dirty work. The locals obliged.

The French Foreign Legion gladly took foreigners, soundly reasoning that the death of a foreigner did not diminish the nation whose Gaulic blood has been considerably thinned by almost incessant war. America is the new Rome, or, considering geographical extent the British Empire. There are no worthy adversaries and so military heroism and honor is void.

Robert Takos, Attica, NY

Matchmaker!

I would like you to know what a huge difference your magazine has made in my life. I placed a personal ad in the magazine recently for one issue. I received two responses. One from the Phillippines. The other from Ohio. Sometime this fall, no date yet, the girl from Ohio and myself plan to get married. This is a match up I only dreamed of.

Neil Uher, Anchorage, AK

Thanks

I recently purchased all of the magazine anthologies & CDs as it fits my lifestyle and personal persuasion. I jokingly tell people I am a redneck but most likely was born to the independence mode of life.

By whatever means necessary keep your excellent articles coming.

Jelaine Zastrow, Two Rivers, WI

Your magazine is the BEST! The articles are insightful, informative and very timely.

Denis Oliver, Bath, NY

The last word

The world's least-free country

Here's a quiz: Which is the freest country on earth? The answer's easy. It's the United States. Ask anyone. And why are we the freest? Not because we're the richest. Long before we became the world's richest nation we still regarded ourselves as the freest, and millions flocked to our shores to enjoy that freedom. The reasons we are free are: First, because of the philosophical basis upon which this country was founded. It is assumed that individuals have rights, e.g., free speech, the right to bear arms, the right of a jury trial before our peers should the government try to imprison us, seize our property, or deprive us of our lives, etc. Second, we have a *Constitution* that limits the powers of a central government to intrude into our lives. And third, our rights have been enshrined in the First 10 Amendments to our *Constitution*.

Many other countries, like England and Canada, also have their own *Bill of Rights*, but those rights are at the pleasure of the government. It says so right in their laws. So they are not "unalienable" rights. Only our country, in all of history, was founded on the assumption that the individual has rights that exist apart from the government and not at its pleasure. Then, in 1868, the Constitution was amended to say that even the states cannot violate our unalienable rights. Pretty powerful stuff. These things form the basis of our freedom and are the reasons why the United States is the freest country on earth.

So if we can identify the freest country, can we also identify that which is the least free? I've tried to find a qualitative way to make that determination, but it's difficult, because no country has a constitution that guarantees tyranny. Even the constitutions of the old Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China read as if those countries were free. You'd never have guessed that what happened under Stalin and Mao could have happened, just from reading those documents. (Of course, you'd never have guessed we once enslaved a huge portion of our own citizens or screwed the Indians out of a large portion of a continent by reading *our Constitution*. But that's another story.)

What I'm getting at is it's hard to determine *qualitatively* which is the least free country on earth. So I decided to see if there is a *quantitative* way to measure it. I found two. First, the country with the most laws would be a candidate for that which is least free. Laws regulate people, so the country which is the least free would surely regulate its people the most. Second, the country with the greatest percentage of its population in jail would also be a candidate for the least free, for obvious reasons. And, if, by chance, some

country not only had the most laws but also had the largest percentage of its own population behind bars, we'd at least have a candidate for the least free country on the planet.

So which country has the most laws regulating its citizenry? After looking high and low I discovered that the country with the most laws—not just today, but *in all of history* is...geez Louise, it's the United States. We not only have the most laws in all of history, but we also turn out more new laws and regulations to manage our people every single year than most countries turn out in decades.

How can it be that the world's freest country needs more laws to tell its people what to do than the Soviet Union, Red China, Nazi Germany, or any two-bit banana republic dictatorship? And it's not like we've always had so many laws. Most of them are new. In 1814, when President Madison and the Congress fled Washington, DC, ahead of the invading English troops bent on arson, they took the papers of the federal government with them. It was easy. They loaded all the laws and regulations into a few boxes and left. This was all the federal government had generated to regulate us in the first 38 years of our existence. Today, Congress and anonymous bureaucrats generate more laws and regulations than that in *minutes*.

Maybe we should consider the other criterion. Which country imprisons the highest percentage of its own citizens? Let's see, Russia's up there. And so is the Union of South Africa. And there are some little potentates as we see in Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan. Hmm, but who leads the list. On, no! Folks, you're not going to like this. It's...it's...the United States, again, heading the list of least free countries. The prime reason is the War on Drugs, the war waged against our country's own citizens "for their own good."

When I presented my results to others, some said if you obey the laws, you have nothing to worry about and you'll still be free. I pointed out that that's the case in *every* country. Toe the line and you won't get in trouble. If the women in Afghanistan wore their burkas and didn't drive or get an education, then by that definition they could still be free. I also pointed out that Jews in Nazi Germany, blacks in the postbellum South, and many American Indians did toe the line and tried to be good citizens but they still got screwed. So obeying the law doesn't guarantee freedom.

Another said, despite all our laws, we have safeguards in that we have a jury system and that those laws are filtered through juries. I pointed out that more and more agencies regulate us without juries. E.g., the IRS, family courts, OSHA, the EPA, etc. don't allow juries. And where juries are allowed the courts exclude people who realize they can nullify bad laws. This is hardly a recipe for freedom.

So, somehow, I have arrived at a paradox. What, *on paper*, would appear to be the freest society in the world appears, in practice, to be among the most oppressive. Does this bother anyone besides me? Δ

— John Silveira